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Implementation of the proposal for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests and the plan of action of the United Nations Forum on Forests: progress in implementation: monitoring, assessment and reporting, concepts, terminology and definitions

Monitoring, assessment and reporting, concepts, terminology and definitions

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) related to monitoring, assessment and reporting and concepts, terminology and definitions call for: improving national forest assessments and information dissemination; building capacity for the collection, analysis and dissemination of data; improving and streamlining forest-related reporting for international purposes; and achieving a common understanding of forest-related definitions.

There has been steady progress in national forest inventories and assessments, especially in developed countries. The scope of forest information collected has widened, and the dissemination of information has improved. Use of data from satellite images and rolling, or continuous, data collection systems has increased with the development of new technologies. More comprehensive global information on forests and forest management is available, in particular through the global Forest

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Resources Assessment. However, major gaps in information still exist, and information needs for national and international purposes are increasing. Limited capacity and financial resources in many developing countries constrain the collection, analysis and dissemination of information. Several international bodies are helping to build country capacity, but further efforts are needed.

Under a joint initiative aimed at streamlining forest-related reporting to international processes, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests have reviewed reporting requirements and developed a web portal for easy access to national reports. They propose to develop a common information framework to improve information management, with a view to helping to reduce the reporting burden on countries. Two expert meetings were held in 2002 on harmonization of forest-related definitions, which launched a multi-stakeholder process to harmonize and achieve more consistent use of forest-related definitions. Work continues, including efforts to harmonize core terms in French and Spanish and to clarify terms related to the naturalness of forests, including planted forests, and low forest cover.

The present report provides information on progress and constraints in implementation of related IPF/IFF proposals for action and proposals for the way forward.

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I. Introduction

1. The multi-year programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests calls for a review of the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) related to monitoring, assessment and reporting and concepts, terminology and definitions at the fourth session of the Forum. Concepts, terminology and definitions were also on the agenda of the second session of the Forum.[1] The present report focuses on implementation of the related IPF/IFF proposals for action and decisions adopted at the second session. The report also discusses the means of implementation, mainly capacity-building related to monitoring, assessment and reporting and some emerging issues.

2. Criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management, a tool used for monitoring, assessment and reporting, among other things, is on the agenda of the fourth session as a separate element. Implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action related to criteria and indicators is dealt with in depth in the report of the Secretary-General prepared for that agenda item (E/CN.18/2004/11) and is therefore not addressed in the present report.

3. Aspects of monitoring, assessment and reporting as a principal function of the Forum[2] will also be addressed at the fourth session under agenda item 5(e), intersessional work, including: (a) the results of the meeting of the Forum's ad hoc expert group on approaches and mechanisms for monitoring, assessment and reporting (E/CN.18/2004/2) and (b) a proposal for a process to facilitate the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests (E/CN.18/2004/12).

4. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) prepared the draft of the present report. Sources of information included: country reports for submission at the fourth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests that were available at the time of preparation; reports of relevant country-led initiatives and other meetings, including the International Expert Meeting on Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting on the Progress towards Sustainable Forest Management held in Yokohama, Japan, in 2001,[3] the International Conference on the Contribution of Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management: The Way Forward, held in Guatemala City, in 2003,[4] the Forum's country-led initiative on lessons learned in monitoring, assessment and reporting on implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, held in Viterbo, Italy, in 2003,[5] and the Expert Consultation on Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management, held in Cebu City, the Philippines, in 2004;[6] the work of Collaborative Partnership on Forests members on streamlining forest-related reporting and on harmonizing definitions;[7] and additional information from other Collaborative Partnership on Forests members and organizations.

II. Background

5. The Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests recognized monitoring, assessment and reporting on forests as critical to countries for sound forest planning and policy development. The IPF/IFF proposals for action call for efforts to improve national forest resource assessments and information dissemination, harmonize forest-related definitions, and make forest-

related information and reporting more streamlined, timely, cost-effective and meaningful for decision makers, with a view to reducing the reporting burden on countries.

6. The table below lists and summarizes the IPF/IFF proposals for action related to monitoring, assessment and reporting, and concepts, terminology and definitions. The summaries in the table are neither negotiated text nor meant to replace negotiated text; they are provided to facilitate the analysis of the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action.

Summary of IPF/IFF proposals for action related to monitoring, assessment and reporting, and concepts, terminology and definitions

Type of action called for	*Proposal(s) for action*
Collection and dissemination of national information on forests Improve national forest resource assessments and make information related to sustainable forest management widely available	IPF 46b, IPF 89b, IFF 17a, IFF 17b
Improved international reporting and information systems on forests Develop improved and streamlined reporting and information systems to assist in the collection, verification, synthesis, interpretation and dissemination of information on progress in sustainable forest management and financial resources to achieve it	IPF 89d, IPF 89e, IPF 115e, IPF 78a, IPF 78b, IPF 78c, IPF 89g, IFF 18, IFF 19a, IFF 30d, IFF 142c
Concepts, terminology and definitions Formulate an internationally acceptable set of definitions of key terms related to forests and forest management, including forest resource assessment, criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management, low forest cover, planted forests and categories of protected areas	IPF 58a, IPF 89f, (IPF 115d), IFF 89, IFF 122a
Means of implementation (capacity-building) Provide assistance to developing countries to strengthen their capacity to collect information and report on forests	IFF 17e, IFF 19b, IFF 17a

7. At its second session, the United Nations Forum on Forests concluded the following points regarding the implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action related to concepts, terminology and definitions:

- Reaching a common understanding of forest-related concepts, terminology and definitions is recognized as important to increase the comparability and compatibility of forest data
- Countries are eager to reduce the redundancy and duplication of international reporting requirements
- Development and implementation of national forest programmes and work on criteria and indicators have led to better understanding of concepts, terminology and definitions
- The international dialogue, including the country-led initiative held in Yokohama, Japan,[3] the expert meeting on harmonizing forest-related definitions for use by various stakeholders,[8] and the (then upcoming) 2003 international meeting on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management,[4] are valuable.

8. The following recommendations were adopted at the session:[9]

The Forum:

- Invited Collaborative Partnership on Forests members to build upon their work on fostering a common understanding of concepts, terminology and definitions and submit a progress report on this to the Forum at its third session
- Invited countries and Collaborative Partnership on Forests members to expedite their work on concepts, terminology and definitions regarding low forest cover
- Invited Collaborative Partnership on Forests members to streamline reporting requests and, to the extent possible, synchronize their reporting cycles so as to reduce the reporting burden on countries.

III. Progress in implementation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action related to monitoring, assessment and reporting, and concepts, terminology and definitions

9. Significant progress has been made in many areas of work related to monitoring, assessment and reporting. These include: improvements in national resource assessments, including widening of the scope of forest-related datasets; continued development and implementation of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management; further development of the global Forest Resources Assessment; continued efforts to harmonize forest-related terms and definitions; the launching of an initiative in streamlining forest-related reporting and reducing the reporting burden on countries; and strengthening of country capacity for collecting, analysing and disseminating forest information. More detailed information is provided in the following sections.

A. Trends and emerging issues in implementation of proposals related to the collection and dissemination of information on forests

1. National

10. Countries' efforts to make monitoring, assessment and reporting on forests more cost-effective, efficient and relevant include:

- Making better use of existing data and reporting systems
- Using unconventional methods to collect information, especially from local sources
- Pooling resources from multiple sources, including outside the forest sector
- Sharing concepts, approaches and experiences
- Determining information needs through the national forest programme process
- Separating information needs for forest management from those required for forest policy
- Building closer linkages between national forest assessments, criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management and national forest programmes
- Improving coordination among national institutions that collect, use or disseminate forest-related information
- Emphasizing systematic monitoring in the field as the basis for gathering information
- Building on the knowledge of countries that have a history of monitoring systematically
- Increasing accessibility and availability of information
- Enhancing stakeholder involvement in monitoring, assessment and reporting at national, regional and global levels.

11. Many countries have made steady progress in the collection of information and statistics in national forest inventories and assessments. The information is used primarily for domestic policy-making, forest management planning, planning forest industry investments and timber procurement, forest research and forest certification, among other things. Increasingly, results are also used for international purposes, such as global and regional analyses and assessments, and for various scientific and policy-relevant reports.

12. A few countries mentioned in their reports submitted at the Forum's fourth session that they had strengthened the linkages between their national forest assessments and inventories, national forest programmes and sets of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. This is a positive development, indicating an effort to more closely link information collection to national policy-making needs, and policy processes to monitoring of progress towards sustainable forest management. However, many countries emphasized the need for more coherent and systematic national monitoring on forests and better access to the latest knowledge on forest management in order to improve forest policy development.

13. In addition to data traditionally collected (e.g. on species and timber volume), many countries are collecting information on new parameters, such as forest health, forest fires, carbon sequestration and non-wood forest products. Attempts are also being made to collect new information related to biodiversity, such as on key habitats, amount and quality of decaying wood, trees left in regeneration cuttings and improved site, soil and landscape descriptions.

14. Satellite imagery has added a new data source for forest mapping and monitoring. Satellite-based land cover inventories can improve the scope of core statistical databases and assist in monitoring changes in land cover. Used in conjunction with ground-based measurements, remote sensing is a useful tool to help determine land-use classification and to identify changes in land cover over time. Interpretation of aerial photography or satellite images can also make field inventory work more efficient. Remote sensing alone is unlikely to provide sufficient information on forest resources to satisfy national forest policy requirements, for which field inventories are also needed.

15. Despite encouraging progress in several areas, many countries, particularly developing countries, still lack reliable information at the national level. An illustration of this is that, in responding to the FAO global Forest Resources Assessment 2000, 61 per cent of developing countries, accounting for 25 per cent of forest area in the developing world, provided information based only on expert opinion or on coarse and inaccurate mapping. Further, while many countries invest in forest inventories, little has been done to assess trees outside forests, even though these resources provide essential products and services, particularly in countries with low forest cover. In addition, limited attention is given by most countries to the collection of information on non-wood forest products and services, although their household use and sale are critically important in many places, particularly for rural people in developing countries. Countries noted in their reports to the United Nations Forum on Forests the need to strengthen knowledge and dissemination of information on forest biological diversity and on economic and social aspects of forests.

16. The quantity and quality of information available depends on countries' ability and willingness to collect it. Data collection must compete for scarce financial resources with many other national priorities. Thus, investments in data collection require careful consideration of what information is essential for decision-making, and it is important that the information collected is used to obvious benefit. The information available is also influenced by the partnerships formed for data collection and the degree to which data are shared. Inventories are sometimes operated as a partnership between the forestry department and private sector, including forest industry and forest owners. Such a collaborative approach fosters willingness of forest owners to provide detailed information on their forest resources.

17. Increased needs for information updated on an annual basis have caused some countries to set up their national forest inventories as rolling systems, where databases are updated and made available once new information is obtained. In such instances, a percentage of the country's plots are measured each year.

18. Use of Internet sites to provide for wide dissemination and easy access to information, including to the public, has been used in several countries with great effectiveness. Democratization has enabled public access to information, but despite

positive changes there are still problems of access to information in many parts of the world. Despite progress in many countries in information dissemination through use of modern information technologies, other countries, particularly developing countries and countries with economies in transition, still suffer from limitations in information dissemination and access, owing in part to the "digital divide". For some countries, use of national forest inventory information for international purposes may be limited by the fact that it is available only in the national language.

19. Several international organizations, among them FAO, the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the World Bank, and bilateral assistance programmes support countries' efforts to improve forest inventories and monitoring. For example, FAO assists countries to carry out national forest assessments through systematic field inventories at sample locations. Data collected includes biophysical measurements and information on the management, uses and users of resources needed for more effective forest planning. Work is ongoing in five developing countries and requests for assistance have been received from about 15 others.

2. International

20. The FAO global Forest Resources Assessment provides information at regular intervals on the world's forest resources, their management and uses, based largely on data provided by countries. The most recent assessment, for 2000, reports on the extent and condition of forests in 212 countries and areas (territories, protectorates, etc.).[10] Intergovernmental partners in the Forest Resources Assessment include the Economic Commission for Europe, ITTO and the World Conservation Monitoring Centre of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). A number of convention secretariats also collaborate. The continued development of global forest assessments is a priority of FAO, which seeks even greater involvement of countries and other international organizations in the process.

21. The Forest Resources Assessment for 2000 will be updated in 2005. It will be structured along the thematic areas (criteria) of sustainable forest management, as recommended by the Kotka IV expert consultation[11] and the 2003 International Conference on the Contribution of Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management: The Way Forward, and endorsed by the FAO Committee on Forestry at its sixteenth session, held in March 2003.[12] About 120 national correspondents gathered in Rome in November 2003 to discuss the contents, guidelines and country reporting for the 2005 Forest Resources Assessment update.[13] A work plan for 2004, which includes considerable support to countries and regions, was developed. Participants expressed a need to build national capacity to respond to increased demand for information and echoed the call to reduce the reporting burden on countries and develop a unified, consistent and stable reporting mechanism. With the link made between the Forest Resources Assessment and criteria and indicators, the Assessment data will be more conducive for use as a source of global information on forests and sustainable forest management. The ongoing efforts to harmonize terms and definitions should increase the compatibility of data reported in the Assessment and other international forest-related processes.

B. Trends and emerging issues in implementation of proposals related to streamlining international reporting and information systems

22. Efforts by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests aimed at streamlining forest-related reporting are under way and are yielding results. The initial activities were presented to and were welcomed by the third session of the United Nations Forum on Forests. They include a web-based portal[14] that provides easy access to reporting formats and to national reports submitted to international processes and a review of international forest-related reporting requirements and processes.

23. In late 2003, the Partnership developed a proposal for a common information framework on national reporting to international bodies. The purpose of the information framework is to facilitate access to information that has been provided through national reports to international organizations and instruments. The information would be organized and searchable by themes and key words. Access to systematically organized information would help to facilitate the use of existing information and would assist organizations and instruments in designing requests and preparing reporting schedules for country reporting. The ultimate goal is to reduce the reporting burden on countries. The information framework would help countries to compile and manage information for reporting purposes. Collaborative Partnership on Forests members are willing to continue the development of the framework. However, this would require that adequate support and resources be made available.

24. In addition to these initiatives, progress has been made on joint information requests. A successful example is the Joint Forest Statistics Questionnaire, which is used and continually developed by the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT), FAO, ITTO and the Economic Commission for Europe. It is aimed at enhancing accuracy and reliability of information on the forest products production, consumption and trade, and reducing the reporting burden on countries. Through the joint questionnaire, which consolidates the data needs of all the partners, countries are asked to provide data on forest products only once, rather than to respond to several questionnaires, as in the past. This example demonstrates that it is indeed an option to issue joint requests for information that is needed by two or more bodies. Making greater use of existing information, such as Forest Resources Assessment data, to fulfil the information needs of various international processes would also ease the reporting burden. In order for such streamlining efforts to be feasible, it would be necessary to further harmonize and consistently use forest-related definitions. Achieving more streamlined forest-related reporting is dependent upon the governing bodies of the organizations and instruments that request forest-related information (e.g. the United Nations Forum on Forests, forest-related conventions and international organizations) to adopt necessary measures in this regard.

25. Convention secretariats and other partners are also working to harmonize national reporting among conventions dealing with biological diversity, with the United Nations Environment Programme-World Conservation Monitoring Centre leading the task.[15] Closer collaboration between this exercise and work to streamline forest-related reporting would be desirable.

C. Trends and emerging issues in implementation of proposals related to concepts, terminology and definitions

26. Progress has been made on most of the IPF/IFF proposals for action related to concepts, terminology and definitions, although they need to be further harmonized and used more consistently in forest-related reporting. In this regard, efforts continue both through the Collaborative Partnership on Forests[16] and the Forest Resources Assessment. As the Forum requested at its second session, Partnership members reported progress on definitions to the third session through its Collaborative Partnership on Forests Framework 2003 (E/CN.18/2003/INF.1).

27. FAO, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Centre for International Forestry Research, and the International Union of Forest Research Organizations jointly organized an expert meeting in Rome in January 2002 to discuss issues related to concepts, terminology and definitions. This marked the beginning of a multi-stakeholder process to harmonize forest-related definitions and achieve more consistent use with a view to reducing reporting requirements. A second meeting, co-organized by these organizations and UNEP, was held in Rome in September 2002.[17] A comparison was made of how various international processes and instruments define key forest-related terms, including the commonalities and differences between them. The effort stressed that harmonization, not standardization, of definitions was needed, whereby terms are adjusted to improve their compatibility, consistency, comparability, linkages and hierarchies. The next steps in this process includes harmonizing core terms in French and Spanish, and clarifying terms related to naturalness of forests and planted forests.

28. Both expert meetings concluded that differences are minor in the definitions of forest, forest land, forested land, other wooded land, non-forest, reforestation, forest degradation and forest improvement. The terms old-growth forest and semi-natural forest are used in different regions and to mean different things. Terms used inconsistently and requiring new formulations or adaptations include "other land" (land other than that classified as forest and other wooded land), afforestation, deforestation, planted forest, forest rehabilitation, forest restoration, forest fragmentation, secondary forest, trees outside forests and low forest cover.

29. Specific terms and concepts that IPF and IFF requested be clarified are: planted forests, low forest cover, categorization of protected areas, terms and definitions used in criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, and linkages between certification and criteria and indicators. Progress in these areas is described below.

30. *Planted forests*. In response to the IFF call for an international definition of planted forests, the Forest Resources Assessment 2000 adopted a definition of forest plantations that was developed through a process of international consultation in the Forest Resources Assessment Advisory Group and in other forums. However, defining the naturalness of forest, including planted forests, remains a challenge, one that the Assessment and the forest definitions harmonization process are committed to resolve. Definitions for modified natural forests, semi-natural forests, planted forests and plantation forests have been problematic for policy and decision makers, planners and foresters for decades. It is not always possible to distinguish a plantation forest from a natural forest, particularly in temperate and boreal regions,

when it is of mixed species, mixed age, or when it consists of endemic species grown in long rotation. The distinction between plantation forests and natural forests is clearer in plantings of single species, uniform planting densities, even age classes, and stands with short rotation periods and/or intensive management, as often found in tropical and subtropical regions.

31. *Low forest cover*. Many processes, including the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, the United Nations Forum on Forests and the Tehran Process,[18] have called for a definition of low forest cover. UNEP and the International Union of Forest Research Organizations have analysed the issue and suggested that countries be classified according to a combination of variables, which could include the following ratios: forest per capita, forest to total land area, forest and other wooded land to total land area, existing forest area to original forest area; or actual forest area to potential forest area. The feasibility of using composite indices to characterize low forest cover countries needs to be further assessed. Whatever definition of low forest cover is ultimately decided upon, it should be recognized that countries situated in dry zones are often highly sensitive to changes that could move them over the "low forest" threshold and thus frequently change their status of being or not being a low forest cover country. Furthermore, the difficulty of accurately estimating forest area in marginal natural conditions is an issue. Developing ways to increase the accuracy of assessments of vegetation cover in arid zones would be important. This could possibly be done in conjunction with the work carried out under other processes, especially the Forest Resources Assessment and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

32. *Categories of protected forest areas*. The categorization of protected areas developed by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) is the most widely accepted system for use in global and national reporting. The fifth IUCN World Parks Congress,[19] held in Durban, South Africa, from 8 to 17 September 2003, recommended, among other things, that the IUCN categories of protected areas be further developed and that IUCN strengthen its efforts to promote greater understanding of them at national and international levels. The IUCN categories have been used at the global level as the basis for Forest Resources Assessment 2000 data on forests in protected areas. They have been used at the regional level by the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe. As a result of difficulties experienced in the collection of data on protected areas in Europe on the basis of the IUCN categories of protected areas, the Fourth Ministerial Conference, held in Vienna, from 28 to 30 April 2003, adopted Assessment Guidelines for Protected and Protective Forests and Other Wooded Land in Europe.[20] These guidelines define five classes according to management objectives and interventions. These are linked to the IUCN categories. The Ministerial Conference also agreed on general principles to designate protected areas, which include legal status, long-term commitment and explicit designation.

33. *Terms and definitions in criteria and indicators*. Work is under way to clarify terms and definitions used in criteria and indicators processes. This was specifically discussed in the FAO/ITTO Expert Consultation on Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management, organized in Cebu City, the Philippines, in March 2004, as a follow-up meeting to the 2003 International Conference on the Contribution of Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management.[21] The issue is also addressed in the report of the Secretary-General on criteria and

indicators of sustainable forest management for submission at the fourth session of the Forum (E/CN.18/2004/11).

34. *Certification*. Problems have arisen from inconsistent use of terminology among certification systems and between certification systems and processes of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. Although this is a difficult issue to solve, progress is being made; many certification schemes are using criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management as a basis or reference point for their performance standards.

35. *Afforestation, reforestation and deforestation*. Definitions for afforestation, reforestation, and deforestation have been adopted for use in the global Forest Resources Assessment. Disagreement on what definitions for these terms should be used for the purposes of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol has slowed down negotiations within the Convention. The Seventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties defined the terms forest, afforestation, reforestation, deforestation, and forest management[22] and asked the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to define forest degradation. The Ninth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties established rules and modalities for afforestation and reforestation under the Clean Development Mechanism but, in the end, the parties agreed to revert to previous definitions, given that the one for reforestation presented particular difficulties. In addition, the Ninth Meeting postponed a decision on the definition of forest degradation, opting to invite submissions on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change proposal. The Panel's Good Practice Guidance for Land-use and Forestry contains many forest-related definitions and the Ninth Meeting accepted those parts of the guide that apply to the preparation of National Greenhouse Gas Inventories. However, it postponed a decision on the sections that apply to the Kyoto Protocol until the Tenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

36. Various lists of definitions have been developed and contribute to the clarification and consistent use of definitions. These include: FAO's *Unified Wood Energy Terminology*, which major partners and organizations, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Energy Council have adopted,[23] forest biodiversity definitions from the Convention on Biological Diversity;[24] Global Fire Monitoring Centre: Fire Management Glossaries;[25] Adequacy of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Guidelines for reporting national activities under the Kyoto Protocol;[26] and the UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre Glossary of Biodiversity Terms.[27] Furthermore, the International Union of Forest Research Organizations clearing house for multilingual forest terminology, Silvavoc,[28] provides bibliographical and consultation services about forest terminologies and terminological activities and contributes to the harmonization and integration of terminology. The International Union has also recently developed a multilingual glossary of carbon-related terminology.

IV. Means of implementation

37. The IPF/IFF proposals for action encouraged developing countries to seek the donor community's assistance for their forest information and reporting efforts, and called upon countries, Collaborative Partnership on Forests members and other relevant organizations to help build capacity in developing countries for periodic

and timely collection, review, synthesis and utilization of information related to sustainable forest management.

38. Most efforts in capacity-building centre on reinforcing technical know-how for collecting and managing data. Activities of international organizations working with countries to strengthen their capacity for forest information management include helping to:

- Strengthen abilities to collect data through national inventories
- Establish analytical functions that can turn data into useful information
- Institutionalize information management and dissemination by developing a system to maintain and update data and to ensure the data's neutrality, transparency, security and access to the public
- Establish long-term policy goals for forest monitoring and assessment.

Success factors include:

- Strong institutions to carry out independent and neutral monitoring, assessment and reporting
- National commitments to provide sufficient resources and responsibilities
- Acknowledgement and use of the information produced in policy processes as well as in education, the media, and publications, among other forums
- Production of relevant, timely and reliable reports from monitoring and assessment in response to policy requirements
- Support at for the maintenance and use of these data and financial resources to sustain data collection over the long term
- Collaboration and coordination among national institutions and organizations
- Involvement of stakeholders in all stages of collection, analysis and reporting of information
- International collaboration.

39. IFF recognized the need to strengthen capacity for national data collection, analysis and reporting on forests, particularly in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in order to improve decision-making and policy and programme development. They also identified the need for greater coordination and cooperation within and among countries and with international organizations and instruments for periodic and timely collection, review, synthesis and utilization of forest-related information.[29]

40. Capacity-building on monitoring, assessment and reporting is often addressed as an integral part of national forest programmes. Activities to assist developing countries to build capacities to monitor, assess and report on forests are being undertaken as an integral part of the programmes and projects of members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. In addition to the examples provided in this section, information related to capacity-building on criteria and indicators is provided in document E/CN.18/2004/11. Examples follow.

41. FAO supports national institutions in developing and implementing national forest assessments through training in forest inventory, information management and

assessment methodologies; implementation by national teams of systematic field inventories; and the establishment of national forestry information services, particularly for national forest programme purposes. FAO also assists developing countries and regions through forest sector outlook studies, criteria and indicators processes and strengthening national forest programmes, including through the National Forest Programme Facility.

42. The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) supports the development of national forest statistical information systems and training and field testing of the ITTO Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Management of Natural Tropical Forests. ITTO has conducted seven regional workshops to build members' statistical capacity. Twelve country-level projects in the development of national forest statistical systems have thus far been implemented. ITTO has been conducting national training workshops on the application of the ITTO Criteria and Indicators in its producing member countries. Members are encouraged to undertake their national level reporting to ITTO using the ITTO Criteria and Indicators as well, with a view to facilitating the preparation of the ITTO Report on the state of forest management in the tropics for publication in 2004.

43. Several other members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests are actively helping to build national capacity for data collection, processing and reporting and to assist in improving in-country coordination for reporting to different processes and instruments. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change supports capacity-building for information collection, analysis and dissemination for forest-related carbon inventories. The Centre for International Forestry Research plays a significant role in capacity-building through its work on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, including through country-level testing and training. The World Bank supports capacity-strengthening efforts for forest data and information through projects in many countries. The Global Environmental Facility provides funding to strengthen country capacity in the collection, dissemination and analysis of forest information as a component of projects related to biodiversity, climate change and land degradation. The United Nations Development Programme provides technical support to countries for monitoring and reporting progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and helps them to seek financial assistance for the preparation and distribution of the reports. The Special Programme for Developing Countries of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, in collaboration with the Centre for International Forestry Research and the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Centre and in technical cooperation with FAO, organized the expert meeting entitled "Capacity-building for Forest Scientists in Latin America in Criteria and Indicators, Auditing of Sustainable Forest Management and Forest Certification", which was held in Turrialba, Costa Rica in May 2003.

44. With regard to capacity-building in general, a number of countries indicated in their reports to the United Nations Forum on Forests that they had supported training activities related to criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management (see E/CN.18/2004/__) and for carrying out national forest assessments, among other things. Many donor countries gave examples of their support to developing countries for a wide range of activities, including assistance to carry out and publish national forest inventories.

45. A number of recent meetings have made recommendations on strengthening country capacity for forest resources inventories and for monitoring and assessment. These include the expert consultation held in Kotka, Finland, in July 2002,[30] the meeting of national Forest Resources Assessment correspondents[31] and the United Nations Forum on Forests ad hoc expert group on monitoring, assessment and reporting.

46. The ad hoc expert group concluded that meetings and initiatives related to monitoring, assessment and reporting produced several recommendations on capacity-building that warranted the consideration of the Forum. Participants noted that these functions are complex and that those requesting information are not always aware of the challenges their demands place on countries that have limited capacity to respond. Although many developing countries and countries with economies in transition possess the knowledge, they lack the resources to carry out effective monitoring, assessment and reporting. In addition, the expert group felt there was a need to motivate national focal points and to bridge the communication gap between personnel responding to requests and information providers. One way to increase international support for capacity-building to monitor, assess and report on sustainable forest management, including the implementation on IPF/IFF proposals for action, was to include those functions in national development action plans, poverty reduction strategies and national forest programmes.

V. Conclusions

47. **Increased attention is being paid to monitoring, assessment and reporting and to exchanging related experiences. It is widely recognized, however, that these functions are not ends in themselves. The Conference on Environment and Development, the post-Conference forest process through the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests and the United Nations Forum on Forests, and several country-led initiatives and other meetings have recognized that periodic assessments are essential for carrying out effective long-term planning, detecting problems and signalling the need to make adjustments in policies and programmes, and evaluating the effects of interventions, both in qualitative and quantitative terms. The primary goal of forest-related monitoring, assessment and reporting is to facilitate informed decision-making within countries, but these are also important for policy deliberations and action at the regional and international levels.**

48. **Despite encouraging developments regarding information collected on forests at all levels, many countries lack basic knowledge about their forests and uses of their resources. Efforts continue to make monitoring, assessment and reporting more cost-effective, efficient and relevant.**

49. **The continued development of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations global Forest Resources Assessment is important in order to provide comprehensive information on forest resources globally, to contribute to decision-making related to sustainable forest management at the regional and global levels, and to help harmonize and streamline forest-related reporting.**

50. **A common information framework for national forest-related reporting to international processes, proposed by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, could facilitate the monitoring and assessment of progress and the drafting of**

reports both at the national and international levels, thereby reducing the reporting burden on countries.

51. Better synergies should be sought between work of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests on streamlining forest-related reporting and the work that the United Nations Environment Programme is leading on streamlining national reporting in biodiversity-related conventions.

52. The process to harmonize forest-related definitions of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Centre for International Forestry Research, the International Union of Forest Research Organizations and the United Nations Environment Programme, and work on definitions in the global Forest Resources Assessment process are complementary and are gathering momentum. Collaborators and stakeholders, including intergovernmental organizations, country experts, academics, scientists and international non-governmental organizations, are strongly supporting efforts to resolve difficulties associated with forest-related definitions that have posed difficulties to foresters and planners for decades. Such work would merit the endorsement of the United Nations Forum on Forests and could serve as a catalyst for Governments to send consistent messages to different governing bodies on the use of definitions.

53. Most discussions on capacity-building centre on reinforcing technical know-how regarding ways to collect and manage data. The financial resources to sustain data collection over the long term may not be forthcoming if countries are not convinced of the need to maintain these data. Institutional changes required to build capacity and to improve information take time. Thus, a long-term view and long-term planning are necessary. Where forestry forms a relatively small part of the economy, synergies with other sectors or regional collaboration may be needed to mobilize a critical mass of resources for forest information management.

VI. Points for discussion

54. The United Nations Forum on Forests may wish to consider the following points for discussion:

(a) Taking into consideration the outcomes of the recent United Nations Forum on Forests country-led initiatives and other meetings held in Japan, Italy, Guatemala and the Philippines, and noting with appreciation the work of Collaborative Partnership on Forests members on streamlining forest-related reporting and their efforts to keep countries and other stakeholders informed about these activities, the United Nations Forum on Forest may wish to:

(b) Invite Collaborative Partnership on Forests members to strengthen their activities and collaboration at the national level to assist countries to build capacity for forest-related information collection, management, dissemination and reporting on forests, with a view to making monitoring, assessment and reporting more cost-effective, efficient and relevant to decision makers;

(c) Encourage Collaborative Partnership on Forests members to continue to make readily accessible information from national reports,

including through the development of a common information framework for forest-related reporting to international instruments, and to further publicize the work of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests on streamlining reporting, including to its members' governing bodies;

(d) Urge the member States to provide consistent guidance on monitoring, assessment and reporting to the various international forest-related bodies, with a view to reducing the reporting burden and facilitating the compilation of reports and analyses at the national and international levels;

(e) Urge the member States and invite Collaborative Partnership on Forests members to support and strengthen the definitions harmonization process under way under the Collaborative Partnership on Forests;

(f) Urge governing bodies of Collaborative Partnership on Forests members to take note and take advantage of the work being done on definitions, make wider use of existing definitions, to the extent possible, and to refrain from creating new definitions unless they are justified and created in a manner that permits adjustments or conversions to be made with ease.

Notes

[1] See the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.18/2002/8) and the report of the second session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2002, Supplement No. 22* (E/2002/42), chap. II.B, resolution 2/2.

[2] In its resolution 2000/35, the Economic and Social Council identified monitoring, assessment and reporting as one of the six principal functions of UNFF.

[3] The meeting was hosted by Japan and co-sponsored by Australia, Brazil, Ghana, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Norway and the United States of America, and was held from 5 to 8 November 2001. The report is available in document E/CN.18/2002/12.

[4] This meeting was organized by the Guatemalan Instituto Nacional de Bosques, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Tropical Timber Organization and the Governments of the United States of America and Finland, and was held in Guatemala City, from 3 to 7 February 2003. The report of the meeting is available at http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/005/Y8694E/Y8694E00.HTM.

[5] The initiative was hosted by Italy and co-sponsored by Brazil, China, Italy, Japan, South Africa, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, with the support of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Tropical Timber Organization and the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat, and was held in Viterbo, Italy, from 17 to 20 March 2003. The report is contained in document E/CN.18/2003/9.

[6] The meeting was hosted by the Philippines and organized by the FAO and the ITTO, and held from 2 to 4 March 2004.

[7] See the Collaborative Partnership on Forests web site (http://www.fao.org/forestry/cpf) and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests Frameworks 2003 (E/CN.18/2003/INF.1) and 2004 (E/CN.18/2004/INF.1) for more information.

[8] At the time of the second session, one expert meeting on harmonizing definitions had been held, in Rome, in January 2002, jointly organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Centre for International Forestry Research, the International Union of Forest Research Organizations and the United Nations Environment Programme. The report is available at http://www.fao.org/forestry/fop/fopw/Climate/climate-e.asp.

[9] For the exact wording of the recommendations, see *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2002, Supplement No. 22* (E/2002/42), chap. II.B, resolution 2/2, sect. E, paras. 1-4.

[10] http://www.fao.org/forestry/fo/fra/index.jsp.

[11] Global Forest Resources Assessments — Linking national and international efforts. Proceedings of the Expert Consultation, held in Kotka, Finland, from 1 to 5 July 2002. See www.fao.org/forestry/fra-kotka4.

[12] Held in Rome, from 10 to 14 March 2003. The report is available at http://www.fao.org/forestry/cofo.

[13] See the report of the training meeting at www.fao.org/forestry/fra.

[14] http://www.fao.org/forestry/cpf-mar.

[15] More information may be accessed at the Collaborative Partnership on Forests web site at http://www.fao.org/forestry/cpf-mar.

[16] See the Collaborative Partnership on Forests Framework 2004, E/CN.18/2004/INF.1.

[17] The reports of the two expert meetings on harmonizing definitions, jointly organized by FAO, IPCC, CIFOR, IUFRO and UNEP, and held in 2002 at FAO headquarters in Rome, are available at http://www.fao.org/forestry/fop/fopw/Climate/climate-e.asp.

[18] The Government-led initiative, entitled "International Meeting on Special Needs and Requirements of Developing Countries with Low Forest Cover", organized by the Islamic Republic of Iran in Tehran in 1999. The report was submitted at the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (E/CN.17/IFF/2000/7).

[19] The report is available at http://www.iucn.org/themes/wcpa/wpc2003/pdfs/outputs/wpc/recommendations.pdf.

[20] See annex 2 to Vienna Resolution 4, at http://www.mcpfe.org/livingforestsummit/secure/k-tools/phplib/MedienDatenbankView.inc.php?id=199.

[21] A link to the report will be placed on the United Nations Forum on Forests web site (http://www.un.org/esa/forests/) as soon as it is available.

[22] FCCC/CP/2001/13/Add.1.

[23] http://www.fao.org/forestry/foris/webview/energy/index.jsp?siteId=3281&langId=1.

[24] http://www.biodiv.org/programmes/areas/forest/definitions.asp.

[25] http://www.fire.uni-freiburg.de/literature/glossary.htm.

[26] http://www.grida.no/climate/ipcc/land_use/305.htm.

[27] http://www.unep-wcmc.org.

[28] http://www.iufro.org.

[29] See E/CN.17/1997/12, para. 115 (c); and E/CN.17/2000/14, para. 17 (a).

[30] Global Forest Resources Assessments — Linking national and international efforts. Proceedings of the Expert consultation, held in Kotka, Finland, from 1 to 5 July 2002. See www.fao.org/forestry/fra-kotka4.

[31] Training of National Correspondents on Assessing and Monitoring of Forest Land use and Changes, Rome, 17 to 21 November 2003, Proceedings. Forest Resources Assessment Working Paper 80. See www.fao.org/forestry/fra.

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Implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests and the plan of action of the United Nations Forum on Forests

Criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management are recognized as an important framework for assessing the state of and trends in forest resources and forest management and to build a common understanding of what constitutes sustainable forest management. Important advances in the development and application of criteria and indicators have been made over the past several years. Currently, 149 countries participate in one or more of nine regional or international criteria and indicators processes. All the processes have identified sets of criteria and indicators for use at the national level, and some have developed sets at the subnational level. International organizations, including several members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, have been instrumental in providing support to the development of these processes and in assisting countries in testing and implementing criteria and indicators at the national and subnational levels. Many countries have used criteria and indicators as a framework for strategic planning, monitoring sustainable forest management and national forest programmes, developing certification schemes, and catalysing cross-sectoral coordination and stakeholder participation. Use of criteria and indicators for monitoring sustainable forest management at the regional or eco-regional level has made significant progress in some criteria and indicators processes. The full realization of the potential of

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criteria and indicators as tools for sustainable forest management is constrained in many countries, especially developing countries and countries with economies in transition, by insufficient political support, financial resources, and institutional and technical capacity. Continued and increased political, financial and technical support is needed to overcome these constraints. Collaboration and common approaches to data collection and definitions among criteria and indicators processes and by global instruments that use forest-related indicators and the global Forest Resources Assessment could further the use of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management at the regional and global levels, streamline reporting and increase consistency of data.

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I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Forum on Forests identified the topic "criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management" as one of the Forum elements. The Forum's multi-year programme of work calls for the review of the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) related to this topic at the fourth session.[1] The present report assesses progress in the implementation of the related IPF/IFF proposals for action, discusses the means of implementation (finance, transfer of environmentally sound technologies and capacity-building) and common items[2] relevant to the topic, and highlights emerging issues that merit the attention of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

2. The draft report was provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO). Sources of information used to prepare the report include the national reports submitted to the United Nations Forum on Forests for its fourth session that were available at the time of preparation, results of country- and organization-led initiatives and other meetings, and inputs from other members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and from regional and international criteria and indicators processes.

II. Background

3. The development of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management represents a major international effort to contribute to the internationally agreed goal of the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, as articulated in the "Forest Principles" and chapter 11 of Agenda 21 (on forests) of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Agenda 21 called for the formulation of scientifically sound criteria and guidelines to help to achieve that goal.

4. Criteria may be defined as the essential elements of sustainable forest management. Criteria contain the major components of sustainable forest management and reflect the present-day objectives and expectations of society towards sustainable forest management. Indicators are qualitative or quantitative parameters of a criterion, which provide a basis for assessing the status of, and trends in, forests and forest management.

5. IPF and IFF recognized criteria and indicators as important tools to help achieve sustainable forest management. IPF and IFF were informed by, among other things, the regional and international criteria and indicators processes under way at the time and the Intergovernmental Seminar on Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management, which was held in August 1996 in Helsinki.

6. IPF recognized criteria and indicators as a policy tool providing a conceptual framework for the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national forest programmes or related policy frameworks. IFF focused more on criteria and indicators as a tool for monitoring and reporting national trends in the state of, and trends in, all types of forests, and for assessing progress towards sustainable forest management. Table 1 lists the IPF/IFF proposals for action related to criteria and indicators. The summaries of action called for are neither negotiated

text nor are they meant to replace negotiated text; they are provided to facilitate the analysis of the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action.

Table 1
Summary of IPF/IFF proposals for action related to criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management

Type of action called for	*Proposals for action: IPF in E/CN.17/1997/12 IFF in E/CN.17/2000/14*
Develop, test and implement criteria and indicators at the national, subnational and operational levels: encouraged countries, with the support of international organizations, as appropriate, to develop, field test and promote the use of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, including by integrating them into national forest programmes and assessments and using them to monitor trends and promote best forest management practices.	IPF: paras. 17 (d), 89 (a), 115 (a)-(c) IFF: para. 17 (d)
Promote the regional and international development and use of criteria and indicators: urged countries, international organizations and international and regional initiatives to work to achieve a common international understanding of concepts, terms and definitions related to criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management, mutual recognition among sets of criteria and indicators, and methods for the measurement of indicators and the collection and dissemination of data.	IPF: para. 115 (d)
Promote consistency and complementarity between the work on biological indicators of the Convention on Biological Diversity and existing criteria and indicators initiatives: requested the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to take note of existing criteria and indicators initiatives and ensure that its work on biodiversity indicators would be consistent with and complementary to them.	IPF: para. 115 (f)
Provide technical and financial assistance (means of implementation): urged donor countries and multilateral and international organizations to provide technical and financial assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition for further development, field testing and implementation of criteria and indicators at the national, subnational and forest management unit/operational levels.	IPF: para. 115 (c)
Participation (common item): encouraged countries to formulate and implement criteria and indicators with the full participation of all interested parties.	IPF: para. 115 (a) and (b)

7. Two recent international meetings on criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management provide important input for consideration by the United Nations Forum on Forests at the current session: the International Conference on the Contribution of Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management, held in Guatemala City from 3 to 7 February 2003,[3] and the Expert Consultation on Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management, held in Cebu City, the Philippines, from 2 to 4 March 2004.[4] The latter was organized by FAO and ITTO and hosted by the Forest Management Bureau, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Philippines, in response to a recommendation of the 2003 Conference on the Contribution of Criteria and Indicators to inform the United Nations Forum on Forests regarding: improving common understanding of concepts, terms and definitions related to criteria and indicators; identifying common approaches, methods and protocols for collecting, storing and sharing data; strengthening criteria and indicator processes and inter-process cooperation; and developing mechanisms to improve inter-process communication and address technical issues related to criteria and indicators. The present report draws extensively on the background information, conclusions and recommendations of that Conference. As the present report was completed before the Expert Consultation in the Philippines was convened, it does not refer to the outcome of the meeting. The reports of the two meetings provide useful background information.

8. Two related issues will be discussed at the fourth session: (a) progress in implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action related to monitoring, assessment and reporting, concepts, terminology and definitions; and (b) the outcome of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Approaches and Mechanisms for Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting, which met at Geneva from 8 to 12 December 2003 (see E/CN.18/2004/2). The former item will focus on monitoring, assessment and reporting on forests, including collecting data on indicators, but will not address criteria and indicators processes per se, as that is covered in the present report. The latter item will concentrate on the United Nations Forum on Forests function to monitor and assess progress in implementing the IPF/IFF proposals for action, and towards sustainable forest management, including through the use of criteria and indicators.

III. Implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests related to criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management

A. Progress in implementation of the proposals for action

9. Over the past decade, criteria and indicators processes, operating at different levels but catalysed in large part by initiatives at the regional and international levels,[5] have facilitated the implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action related to criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. In the early 1990s, ITTO pioneered the development of criteria and indicators for sustainable management of natural tropical forests. Since then, eight other criteria and indicators processes have been launched (see table 2). A total of 149 countries, representing about 85 per cent of the world's forests, are now participating in one or more of

these nine processes. The processes have stimulated the development and implementation of criteria and indicators at the national, subnational and operational levels and have made possible the use of criteria and indicators at the regional and global levels.

Table 2
Regional and international criteria and indicators processes

Initiative/process	*Date launched*	*Number of countries involved*	*Region (vegetation zone/geographic area)*
Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (Pan-European Process)	1994	44[a]	European boreal and temperate forests (includes the portion of Russia's forests located in Asia)
Montreal Process	1995	12[b]	Mainly temperate and boreal forests in North and South America, Asia and Oceania
ITTO	1992	32[c]	Tropical natural forests
Tarapoto Proposal	1995	8[d]	Amazon Basin
African Timber Organization	1996	14[e]	Tropical forests of Africa
Dry-Zone Africa Process	1995	30[f]	Sub-Saharan Africa
Near East Process	1996	30[g]	Near East
Dry Forest Asia Initiative	1999	9[h]	South Asia and Mongolia, China, Myanmar, Thailand
Lepaterique Process	1997	7[i]	Central America
Total number of countries involved		**149**	

Source: Based on Simula, M., "Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management: Overview of Progress and Issues", in: International Conference on the Contribution of Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management, volume 2 (see: www.fao.org/DOCREP/005/J077E/J077E00.HTM), with input from the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe secretariat:

(a) In addition, the European Community is a member. Russia is also under the Montreal Process and Turkey is also under the Near East Process.

(b) China is also under the Dry Forest Asia Initiative.

(c) Comprised of all ITTO producing member countries, which are located in the tropical areas of several regions: Africa, Asia, North and Central America, Oceania and South America. (The total number of ITTO members is 58.)

(d) All countries are also ITTO producing member countries.

(e) In the African Timber Organization process, 10 countries are ITTO producing member countries and 3 countries belong to the Dry-Zone Africa process: Angola (Dry-Zone Africa), Cameroon (ITTO), Central African Republic (ITTO), Congo (ITTO), Côte d'Ivoire (ITTO), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (ITTO and Dry-Zone Africa), Equatorial

Guinea, Gabon (ITTO), Ghana (ITTO), Liberia (ITTO), Nigeria (ITTO), Sao Tome and Principe, the United Republic of Tanzania (Dry-Zone Africa) and Togo (ITTO).

(f) Four countries also belong to the Near East process.

(g) Four countries are also Dry-Zone Africa process members (Djibouti, Mauritania, Somalia and Sudan) and one is a member of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe.

(h) Three are also ITTO producing members (India, Myanmar and Thailand) and China is also a member of the Montreal Process.

(i) Three countries are also ITTO producing member countries (Guatemala, Honduras and Panama).

1. Status of implementation

Develop, test and implement criteria and indicators at the national, subnational and operational levels

10. All the regional and international processes have developed a set of criteria and indicators for application at the national level. Three of the nine processes — African Timber Organization, ITTO and Tarapoto — have produced sets of criteria and indicators to be applied at the forest management unit level. In addition, the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe has developed "Pan-European Operational Level Guidelines for Sustainable Forest Management", which follow the structure of the six pan-European criteria and form a common framework of recommendations that can be used on a voluntary basis and as a complement to national and/or regional instruments to further promote sustainable forest management at the field level. All these sets have stimulated the application of criteria and indicators in countries.

11. Many countries (most notably in Latin America, North America, Europe and South-East Asia) have used a set of criteria and indicators developed by a regional or international process to help orient decision-making and policy development in their forest sector. Some countries have used a regional set as the basis for developing their own national set of criteria and indicators. As of 2003, 23 countries had developed national or subnational criteria and indicators, and another 16 countries were in the process of doing so.

12. Countries have used criteria and indicators for a range of purposes. They are used as a framework for developing and assessing the effectiveness of national forest programmes or related policy processes, monitoring progress towards sustainable forest management, developing certification standards, communicating progress to policy makers and the public, and engaging stakeholders in forest-related activities, among other things. Criteria and indicators contribute to the formulation and implementation of national and subnational forest programmes and help monitor the outcomes of environmental policies and legislation. They have helped identify information gaps and set the stage for decisive action on the conservation and sustainable management of forests. Box 1 provides some examples of the application of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management in various countries.

Box 1.

Examples of how criteria and indicators are used in national forest policy processes and for other applications in various countries

Malaysia coordinates and implements criteria and indicators at the national and forest management unit levels through a National Committee on Sustainable Forest Management established in 1994 by the Ministry of Primary Industries. Malaysia's criteria and indicators are based on the set developed by ITTO. Criteria and indicators have enabled improved multi-stakeholder dialogues with interested parties and reporting on progress towards sustainability. Malaysia has used its criteria and indicators to launch its Timber Certification Scheme. It is also leading the effort to develop a Pan Asian Timber Certification Scheme based on the ASEAN Regional Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Management of Natural Tropical Forests, which are based on ITTO criteria and indicators.

Canada, as a member of the Montreal Process, uses its national criteria and indicators as the framework to clarify the meaning of sustainable forest management; monitor, assess and report on progress at the national level; provide relevant information to the public and policy makers; and provide a reference point for the development of forestry policies.

India relies on criteria and indicators as a tool for strengthening institutional capacities at the national and local levels, to facilitate the exchange of information between stakeholders and to improve multi-stakeholder participation in sustainable forest management.

The new forestry law of *Honduras* states that criteria and indicators are to be the framework to monitor, assess and report on progress towards sustainable forest management for the country's national forest programme. Honduras has derived criteria and indicators at the forest management unit level from the national ones.

The forest policy and strategy of *Finland* are articulated in its National Forest Programme 2010 and regional forest programmes. Criteria and indicators influenced the formulation and updating of the National Forest Programme and are seen as a means to monitor its implementation. Some of the indicators of sustainable forest management have also been adopted as indicators for monitoring implementation of the national strategy for natural resource management. The criteria and indicator process has also influenced the recent updating of national guidelines for forest management practices at the forest management unit level.

The *United Kingdom* in 2002 developed and published the United Kingdom Indicators of Sustainable Forestry, which are linked to the United Kingdom Forestry Standard and the criteria and indicators of Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe. The set of indicators were developed through two rounds of wide consultation. They allow for both a comprehensive overview of the forest sector in the United Kingdom as well as flexibility to accommodate the

concerns of the countries that make up the United Kingdom and the devolved administration of the sector. The indicators together provide a comparable overview by giving information for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, which can be supplemented by indicators linked to the special objectives and actions in each country's Forestry Strategy.

Sources: Reports of criteria and indicator processes, the report of the 2003 Conference on the Contribution of Criteria and Indicators, and national reports to the Forum at its fourth session.

Promote regional and international development and use of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management

13. The degree that criteria and indicators are used at the regional and eco-regional levels varies from process to process. Significant progress has been made under some processes to use criteria and indicators as a monitoring and assessment tool. The Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, Montreal and ITTO processes, involving more than 80 countries, are at the stage of reporting on the status and trends in sustainable forest management using country information. The Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe report entitled *State of Europe's Forests Protection*, which was endorsed at the fourth Ministerial Conference (Vienna, 2003), provides information on sustainable forest management in Europe. The report is structured according to the six pan-European criteria for sustainable forest management and provides data and information on all pan-European indicators for sustainable forest management. The *Montreal Process First Forest Overview Report 2003* which was released in September 2003, includes a subset of seven indicators on which all member countries reported. In 2004, ITTO will publish its first report on the status of tropical forest management in ITTO producer countries, based largely on country reports on the ITTO criteria and indicators.

14. Other criteria and indicators processes are at an earlier stage of implementation. In these, the focus to date has been on identifying, verifying and, in some cases, revising the regional set of criteria and indicators. They have not reported on the status and trends in sustainable forest management using information provided by countries.

15. Despite the potential benefits, the exchange of knowledge and sharing of information, experiences and lessons among and within processes is still limited. Several processes, including the Near East, Dry-Zone Africa, Dry Forests in Asia and Lepaterique processes, do not meet on a regular basis and dialogue within these processes tends to be sporadic. In general, sharing of information between processes is also relatively limited, although international meetings, such as the Intergovernmental Seminar on Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management, the 2003 Conference on the Contribution of Criteria and Indicators and the 2004 Expert Consultation, have provided opportunities for some inter-process interaction, and some processes (e.g., Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe and Montreal) have shared their information and documents and included other processes in their meetings. Consideration should be

given to more regular interaction between processes, including at a technical working level.

16. One of the objectives of the 2003 Conference on the Contribution of Criteria and Indicators and Intergovernmental Seminar on Criteria and Indicators was to consider the feasibility and potential benefits of harmonization among criteria and indicators processes. While the processes differ in content and degree of implementation, they are conceptually similar in their objectives and approaches and share comparable criteria. Over time, convergence or mutual recognition might be possible.

17. Recognizing the similarities in the criteria sets of the nine regional and international criteria and indicators processes, the 2003 Conference identified seven thematic areas of sustainable forest management, which were later noted at the sixteenth session of the FAO Committee on Forestry,[6] (Rome, March 2003). The thematic areas are as follows:

1. Extent of forest resources;
2. Biological diversity;
3. Forest health and vitality;
4. Productive functions of forest resources;
5. Protective functions of forest resources;
6. Socio-economic functions;
7. Legal, policy and institutional framework.

18. The update of the FAO-led global Forest Resources Assessment planned for 2005 will be structured according to the first six of these common thematic areas. The use of the thematic framework for the Assessment was proposed by the Expert Consultation for the Forest Resources Assessment held in Kotka, Finland, in July 2002,[7] was endorsed by the FAO Committee on Forestry in March 2003, and was supported by the meeting of 120 national correspondents for Forest Resources Assessment, held in Rome in November 2003.[8] This change is likely to lead to greater coherence in reporting on the status and trends in the world's forests. National reporting within all three of the processes (Montreal, Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe and ITTO) that have begun collecting criteria and indicators information is already based on these thematic areas, which were derived from the criteria used by these and other processes.

19. The United Nations Forum on Forests, at its first session, recognized criteria and indicators as a useful tool for monitoring progress towards sustainable forest management. The Ad Hoc Expert Group on Approaches and Mechanisms for Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting recommended, for the consideration by the Forum, that the global Forest Resources Assessment update in 2005 and other sources of information from countries and criteria and indicators processes could be used to assess progress towards sustainable forest management globally, thus making additional reporting by countries to the Forum at its fifth session unnecessary (see E/CN.18/2004/2).

20. The use of criteria and indicators at the regional and global levels could be increased by making existing information on forests more accessible and by

harmonizing concepts, terms and definitions related to criteria and indicators. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests, in conjunction with members' efforts to streamline forest-related reporting to international processes, has proposed the development of a common information framework organized according to the seven thematic areas noted in paragraph 17 above. If the framework were developed, it would provide easy access to and help disseminate country information related to forests.[9]

21. The Intergovernmental Panel on Forests called for a common international understanding of concepts, terms and definitions related to criteria and indicators, which would facilitate the assessment of progress towards sustainable forest management at the regional and global levels. This was addressed by the Expert Consultation held in Cebu City, the Philippines, in March 2004.

22. Each regional and international criteria and indicators process has applied its own definitions for criteria and indicators and for key supporting terms. While reaching a common understanding of the former may not be extremely difficult,[10] harmonizing key supporting terms (e.g., forest type) by improving their compatibility, consistency, comparability, linkages and hierarchies is more complex. Two international expert meetings were held in 2002 as a joint Collaborative Partnership on Forests activity on harmonizing definitions of forest-related definitions used in different international instruments.[11] In addition, the United Nations Forum on Forests Intersessional Experts' Meeting on the Role of Planted Forests in Sustainable Forest Management, held in Wellington, New Zealand, from 25 to 27 March 2003, discussed definitions related to planted forests, forest characteristics and forest designation (see E/CN.18/2003/10, annex). These meetings have improved the understanding of different forest-related definitions, but further harmonization is needed to facilitate comparability of data across processes and across international instruments related to forests. That issue is discussed in more detail in a separate document (E/CN.18/ 2004/10), under agenda item 4 (a) (iv) of the fourth session, on monitoring, assessment and reporting, concepts, terminology and definitions.

Ensure consistency and complementarity between the work on biological indicators of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the existing criteria and indicators initiatives

23. All criteria and indicators processes include biological diversity as a criterion of sustainable forest management and have identified related indicators. As consistent with the proposal of IPF, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity has recognized the work of the processes of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management in its work related to the programme of work on forests and to article 7, on identification and monitoring (including indicators), of the Convention. The focus until recently has been on indicators for use at the national and regional levels, but recent developments address global indicators.

24. The Conference of the Parties, in adopting the expanded programme of work on forest biological diversity in 2002 (see decision VI/22) recognizes in paragraph 34 of the decision the existing criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management and agrees that they should be applied where criteria and indicators are needed for the purposes of the expanded work programme, and recognizes the need

for further development and selection of criteria and indicators for the assessment of the status and trends of forest biological diversity at the national and regional levels. In this regard, the Convention on Biological Diversity Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice in its recommendation IX/6 of 2003, recognized that criteria and indicators, developed as tools under the sustainable forest management framework, can also be used to help implement the ecosystem approach.

2. Experiences and lessons learned

25. Many lessons have been learned about the development and use of criteria and indicators. Case studies of countries' experiences were gathered as input to the 2003 Conference on the Contribution of Criteria and Indicators.[12] These case studies, national reports to the United Nations Forum on Forests, and other sources of information provide useful insight into the challenges, constraints and successes experienced by some countries. The following lessons have emerged:

(a) Many countries have developed national-level criteria and indicators to help guide national decision-making on forest policy and management and monitor progress towards sustainable management. The development of the tool has advanced as a result of countries' involvement in one or more of the nine criteria and indicators processes. The development of subnational and forest management unit level indicators have been driven in some cases by certification, and in others by a wish to link national with subnational information;

(b) It is important to have an adequate legal and regulatory basis for sustainable forest management. Some countries have incorporated criteria and indicators into their legislation, whereas others are developing and implementing them within the context of existing legislation;

(c) Countries may need to adapt the national-level indicators developed in regional and international processes to reflect their specific country conditions;

(d) Not all national-level indicators are relevant at subnational levels of application, and priorities attached to them and for monitoring, assessment and reporting, may vary between levels;

(e) National forest assessments and inventories constitute a basic source of information on indicators for use at the national level. However, limitations in the coverage and quality of available data related to forests are a major constraint to the effective implementation of criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management;

(f) As sustainability is a dynamic state, the development of criteria and indicators at the regional and national levels should be a continuous and iterative process in order to respond to changing conditions and values and to new scientific information and technological advances;

(g) Technical and scientific agreement, policy level endorsement, effective regional collaboration supported by international organizations, and wide stakeholder participation are essential for successful implementation of regional and international criteria and indicators processes;

(h) Many of the regional and international criteria and indicators processes initially identified a large number of indicators, but found that collection of data on

all of them was not feasible. Several processes have refined their indicators set so that it is more practical yet still science-based and reflects the environmental, ecological, socio-economic, political and cultural conditions of the countries.

3. Emerging issues

26. Various international bodies and instruments in addition to those discussed in the present report have identified indicators on forests for monitoring and assessment purposes. Many of these instruments relate to sustainable development, and they have identified global indicators for a range of other sectors in addition to forests. These include the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Commission on Sustainable Development, and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, among others.[13] OECD has three forest-related indicators (harvest/productive capacity; area and volume distribution of forests; forest area management and protection); the Commission on Sustainable Development has two indicators (forest area as a percentage of land area, and wood harvesting intensity); and the Millennium Development Goals include one indicator (proportion of land area covered by forests). Much work has gone into the identification of indicators in these different processes. However, those bodies and instruments have worked independently of one another. There has been limited, if any, interaction and coordination among them. The indicator sets differ from one another, and even the same indicators may be based on different terms and definitions. A coordinated approach among the efforts, and in collaboration with the regional and international criteria and indicators processes, would likely benefit countries providing the data and help to streamline data collection and compilation and increase consistency of data. The benefits of closer interaction between the criteria and indicators processes could be considerable. The processes have a wealth of knowledge, gained through years of experience, to share. Also, the indicators for sustainable forest management have been developed from the ground up and with strong technical input, have political commitment behind them, and together the criteria represent a convergence of opinion on what constitutes sustainable forest management.

27. Various other emerging issues may be drawn to the attention of the United Nations Forum on Forests. These include, among other things, consideration of the use of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management in related sectors, such as in rangeland management; their application to such issues as illegal logging or ethical concerns related to forest use; or their use in the assessment of the contribution of forests to poverty alleviation. As new issues emerge, new applications for criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management may become possible and bear consideration.

B. Means of implementation

28. Finance, transfer of environmentally sound technologies and capacity-building are all critical to the implementation of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. Despite significant progress, a number of constraints persist, in particular in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. They include insufficient financial resources; shortages of trained personnel and weak institutional capacity to collect, store, analyse and disseminate data; and a lack of political commitment for implementing and reporting on sustainable forest

management. In addition, there are concerns that limitations on resource availability may hinder future improvement and refinement of criteria and indicator frameworks.

29. The 2003 Conference concluded that "there is also a need to attract and mobilize domestic and external financing, including from the private sector, and to help ensure more efficient use of existing funding and institutional mechanisms to support the development and implementation of criteria and indicators". Technical and financial assistance for criteria and indicators processes has been forthcoming from donor countries, international and regional organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). An exhaustive list is not possible, but some examples follow.

30. Several countries, principally those of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe and Montreal Processes, have provided financial assistance to further criteria and indicators through projects as well as meetings. For example, Austria, Finland and the United Kingdom have actively supported work in other countries, and Finland and the United States of America provided support to the Intergovernmental Seminar on Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management and the 2003 Conference on the Contribution of Criteria and Indicators.

31. Since 1998, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) and World Conservation Union (IUCN) have been instrumental in supporting countries in Central America to further develop and implement criteria and indicators by maintaining a permanent forum for discussion on the applicability of these tools in protected areas and in the management of planted forests. The Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza has also provided assistance in Latin America for criteria and indicators.

32. International organizations have also provided crucial support to the various processes. These include many members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, in particular FAO, ITTO, the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the IUCN and the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO).

33. ITTO, in addition to initiating work on criteria and indicators, has developed guidelines for sustainable management of natural tropical forests (1990) and planted tropical forests (1993), for conservation of biological diversity in tropical production forests (1993), for fire management (1997) and for rehabilitation of degraded tropical forests (2002). ITTO has carried out a series of regional and national training workshops on criteria and indicators throughout the tropics. It has also financed projects in Brazil, Cameroon, China, Colombia, Congo, Gabon, India, Malaysia, Myanmar and the Philippines, as well as with the African Timber Organization, to assist in the development of national-level criteria and indicators and to train local stakeholders. FAO and UNEP supported the development of the Dry-Zone Africa process, the Near East process and the Dry-Forest Asia Initiative, both in the initial development of the criteria and indicators set and in subsequent validation of the indicators. FAO and ITTO have collaborated in actively supporting many regional and international meetings on criteria and indicators. Criteria and indicators for the tropical forests in Africa were developed under the auspices of African Timber Organization, with technical assistance of CIFOR, and, later with the help of ITTO, they were harmonized with the ITTO criteria and indicators. CIFOR, in its support of the development and assessment of criteria and indicators

in tropical countries, has focused mainly on the forest management unit level. It has done pioneering work in testing various criteria and indicators sets under local conditions (including in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon and Ghana), and in 1999 published a comprehensive toolkit for developing them. CIFOR has also supported in-country training activities. IUFRO's Special Programme for Developing Countries, together with the Tropical Agricultural Center for Research and Education (CATIE) and CIFOR and in technical cooperation with FAO, convened an Expert Meeting on Capacity-Building for Forest Scientists in Latin America in Criteria and Indicators, Auditing of Sustainable Forest Management and Forest Certification, which was held in Costa Rica in May 2003.

C. Common items

34. This section addresses the common items of the United Nations Forum on Forests related to criteria and indicators that have not been addressed in preceding sections.

1. Promoting public participation

35. The Intergovernmental Panel on Forests agreed that criteria and indicators should be formulated and revised, as needed, through a transparent process involving all interested parties. Where broad stakeholder participation has taken place, it has contributed to the acceptance and implementation of criteria and indicators.

36. A number of countries have reported to the United Nations Forum on Forests that representatives from a wide range of governmental and non-governmental organizations have taken part in the development of national criteria and indicators. These reports, case studies collected for the 2003 Conference on the Contribution of Criteria and Indicators and other sources of information, document lessons that have emerged from country experiences.[14]

37. Countries have used a wide variety of approaches to engage or sensitize stakeholders. The most common approaches used include conferences, meetings, the development of networks and committees, outreach through the Internet and media, soliciting comments on key documents, and conducting research with the stakeholders. Stakeholders involved in the development and implementation of criteria and indicators are various government agencies, forest owners, environmental NGOs, academics, aboriginal communities and organizations, forest industry representatives and community representatives. In countries where forest management unit-level criteria and indicators were adopted, the key stakeholders involved tended to be forest owners, trade unions, local communities and forest products companies.

38. Experience has shown that it is more effective if all major stakeholders are involved through more detailed consultations than just national workshops. The effort has been found to be more successful if local representatives are involved. It has also been recognized that the process should promote trust and cooperation from stakeholders and increase the transparency and credibility of the scheme. A weakness that has been identified is that in many countries criteria and indicators

have been applied only on public lands, and engaging private land owners in criteria and indicators implementation has been weak.

2. Trade

39. All nine regional and international processes have two criteria related to trade: productive functions of forests; and socio-economic functions of forests. Related indicators include: quantity and volume of wood and non-wood forest products traded; imports and exports of forest products; existence and extent to which the economic and policy frameworks and financial instruments support non-discriminatory trade policies for forest products; and the flow of capital in and out of the forest sector in response to market signals.

40. A second, broader link of criteria and indicators to trade is through forest certification. Criteria and indicators and certification differ in that the former is a forest management tool, while the latter is a market-driven assessment process, but they have a common objective — to promote sustainable forest management — and they can be considered to be complementary. Criteria and indicators can provide a scientifically sound and politically acceptable basis for developing forest auditing and certification standards. Several forest certification standards have been based on criteria and indicators sets. For example, the Pan-European Operational Level Guidelines for Sustainable Forest Management, designed to facilitate countries' implementation of criteria and indicators at the subnational level, have been used as a reference for the development of voluntary national certification standards for endorsement by the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes (PEFC).[15] Some countries (e.g., Malaysia, Canada) have developed certification systems based on their criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. However, this is not to say that certification, as a market tool, can take the role of a national criteria and indicators framework since, in many countries, much of the forest is unlikely to ever be certified and certification systems differ in rigour and applicability. Stronger linkages and clarification between the two tools may be useful.

3. Enabling environment

41. At the national level, the importance of strong capacity in the forestry department and political and legislative support to implementation of criteria and indicators have already been mentioned. In addition, national coordination plays a decisive role in making implementation feasible. Good internal structures to allow for cross-sectoral communication and information sharing are critical. In many countries, participation in criteria and indicators development and implementation has been largely limited to the forest sector, and coordination among government agencies that collect data is weak despite its importance for improving implementation.

42. High-level political commitment and involvement at the ministerial level has proven to be instrumental in the development of criteria and indicators processes. In the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe process, strong political commitment, ministerial meetings at regular intervals and effective mechanisms in place for follow-up work have contributed to the rapid progress of the processes. High-level regional political bodies have fostered the establishment and development of other criteria and indicators processes as well. For example, the

African Timber Organization Ministerial Conference in 2002 endorsed the harmonized African Timber Organization/ITTO principles, criteria and indicators. The Tarapoto process was established and is followed by the Organization for the Amazon Cooperation Treaty. The Lepaterique process has been linked to the implementation of the Central American Forest Convention, which defines a regional policy for sustainable forest management and forest protection.

43. Engaging regional bodies at a policy or technical level has also been found to be an effective way of furthering the development and use of criteria and indicators. For example, the subregional groupings — the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the Southern African Development Community — endorse and closely follow the Dry-Zone Africa Process. Similarly, the Near East Forestry Commission has endorsed and follows the progress of the Near East process.

44. At the international level, recognition by the IPF/IFF/United Nations Forum on Forests process of the value of criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management has facilitated the development of criteria and indicators at the national, regional and international levels. International meetings such as the Intergovernmental Seminar on Criteria and Indicators, the FAO/ITTO/UNEP/CIFOR/IUFRO Expert Meeting on Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management, held in Rome in November 2000, the 2003 International Conference on the Contribution of Criteria and Indicators, the FAO/ITTO Expert Consultation held in the Philippines in March 2004, and the country-led initiative on monitoring, assessment and reporting that took place in Yokohama, Japan, in November 2001 (see E/CN.18/2002/12, annex), and Viterbo, Italy, in 2003 (see E/CN.18/2003/9 and Corr.1, annex), have also helped to enhance international support for developing and implementing criteria and indicators.

IV. Conclusions

45. **The development of criteria and indicators has been one of the main achievements in the forest sector since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. It is a tool that continues to attract interest and further application worldwide. Several international conferences, expert meetings, and country-led initiatives in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests have contributed to their development and application. The IPF/IFF proposals for action related to criteria and indicators have been implemented to a great extent through work by countries, the nine regional and international criteria and indicators processes, FAO, ITTO and other members and organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.**

46. **Countries increasingly are using criteria and indicators as a framework for national forest policy formulation and strategic planning, monitoring of sustainable forest management and national forest programmes, and developing certification schemes. Criteria and indicators have helped to increase the understanding of what sustainable forest management means; refine forest management objectives and practices; identify deficiencies in forest policies, institutional capacity and information; and catalyse cross-sectoral coordination and stakeholder participation in forest planning and decision-making. At the international level, they have also raised the profile of**

forests; enhanced collaboration among countries; and contributed to efforts to streamline international reporting on forests.

47. Although several countries make use of criteria and indicators as a framework for national forest programme processes, there is potential to strengthen this linkage in many other countries.

48. In many countries, more applied research and training on the development, implementation and assessment of criteria and indicators, including at the subnational or forest management unit level, are needed. Although substantial dialogue has taken place on implementing national criteria and indicators, discussions could be expanded to include the subnational and forest management unit level.

49. The development and implementation of criteria and indicators in some countries involve the participation of a range of stakeholders. Efforts are needed elsewhere to involve stakeholders, and to foster an open and transparent participatory process. In most countries, participation of disciplines outside the forest sector needs to be strengthened.

50. A high level of political commitment to criteria and indicators exists in many parts of the world. Some processes, namely the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, Montreal and ITTO processes, have made great strides towards monitoring of and reporting on progress towards sustainable forest management. Processes that are in the early stages of implementation need support from the international community.

51. Increased collaboration and coordination among the processes would facilitate learning and could further implementation and would improve communication. Financing is needed to organize regional and national meetings, publish and distribute documents and improve national and technical capacities. There is also a widely recognized need to expand activities to all countries, including those that do not participate in any of the regional and international processes.

52. Data collected on indicators could be used to fulfil some of the international reporting requirements and help to reduce the reporting burden on countries.

53. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests's proposed common information framework for forest-related reporting, organized according to the common thematic areas of sustainable forest management, could facilitate wider use of existing information by countries and by secretariats of international processes.

54. Over the past years, linkages between criteria and indicators and national and global forest resources assessments have been strengthened. This has contributed to improved assessment and monitoring, wider use of data from national forest inventories, and streamlined data collection and reporting.

55. Progress is being made in increasing the comparability and compatibility of the various regional and international criteria and indicators processes. This has required a concerted effort. Further progress will depend on sustained political, technical and financial support.

56. **At the international level, political commitment to sustainable forest management can be improved through a focused dialogue within and among the various criteria and indicators processes and through increased collaboration between the process of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management and other international instruments (e.g., related to sustainable development) using indicators. Criteria and indicators, as a framework for sustainable forest management, can help orient those discussions, and high-level political awareness of the usefulness of criteria and indicators can help to garner support for their further development and use.**

V. Points for discussion

57. Considering the significant progress countries have made in the development and implementation of criteria and indicators, stimulated in large part by the nine regional and international processes, reinforced through the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, Intergovernmental Forum on Forests and the United Nations Forum on Forests, and supported by members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, notably FAO, ITTO, CIFOR and UNEP; and taking into consideration the recommendations from recent international meetings on criteria and indicators, at its fourth session the United Nations Forum on Forests may wish to consider the following:

(a) Adopt the following common thematic elements of sustainable forest management:

1. Extent of forest resources;
2. Biological diversity;
3. Forest health and vitality;
4. Productive functions of forest resources;
5. Protective functions of forest resources;
6. Socio-economic functions;
7. Legal, policy and institutional framework;

(b) Urge Member States to consider the use of criteria and indicators to help develop and monitor national forest programmes and related policy processes, national forest assessments, certification schemes, and national and international reporting on sustainable forest management;

(c) Call on participating countries and secretariats of criteria and indicators processes to continue to strengthen criteria and indicators processes, particularly those that are in the early stages of implementation;

(d) Urge Member States, FAO and participating organizations to strengthen support to the global Forest Resources Assessment and enhance its linkages to regional and international criteria and indicators processes in order to improve the information base for monitoring, assessment and reporting on sustainable forest management;

(e) Invite the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to continue to streamline forest-related reporting, including by making information

more accessible through the development of an information framework that could be based on the common thematic elements of sustainable forest management;

(f) Invite the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to encourage their respective governing bodies, when developing monitoring mechanisms and indicator sets, to adopt the use of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management as the basis for forest-related monitoring, assessment and reporting;

(g) Encourage FAO, ITTO and other members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to strengthen their support to criteria and indicators processes and foster the global exchange of information, know-how and experiences on implementation;

(h) Invite the National Forest Programme Facility and the Programme on Forests to promote criteria and indicators when helping countries to develop and implement national forest programmes;

(i) Encourage the donor community, criteria and indicators processes, FAO, ITTO, the Global Environment Facility and other relevant organizations and mechanisms to assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition to implement criteria and indicators, including by providing financial support, technology and know-how, and to assist countries that would like to join a process, recognizing that providing such support would be facilitated by countries identifying criteria and indicators as a priority in their official development plans and poverty reduction strategies;

(j) Urge criteria and indicator processes and their member countries to strengthen cooperation, including South-South and North-South cooperation, by sharing experiences and know-how, for example, through joint meetings, workshops, ministerial conferences and e-mail networks;

(k) Encourage national and international institutions to carry out research on criteria and indicators that are difficult to assess, including biological diversity, non-wood forest products, non-market values, soil and water conservation, carbon sequestration and social and cultural aspects and values. Encourage IUFRO centres of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to facilitate related research, according to their mandates.

Notes

[1] This was included in the multi-year programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests for 2001-2005 (see *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2001, Supplement No. 22* (E/2001/42/Rev.1-E/CN.18/2001/3/Rev.1), part two, sect. B, resolution 1/1, para. 4 (c)).

[2] Common items for each session of the UNFF are: multi-stakeholder dialogue; enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination, inter alia, with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests; country experiences and lessons learned; emerging issues relevant to country implementation; intersessional work; monitoring, assessment, and reporting; implementation of the Plan of Action; promoting public participation; national forest programmes; trade; and enabling environment.

[3] For volume 1 of the report of the 2003 Conference, see: www.fao.org/DOCREP/005/Y8694E/Y8694E00.HTM; for volume 2, see: www.fao.org/DOCREP/005/J0077E/J0077E00.HTM.

[4] For the report see: http://www.un.org/esa/forests.

[5] International criteria and indicators processes refer to the Montreal process and ITTO, which have eco-regional coverage. The other processes have geo-regional coverage.

[6] For the report, see: www.fao.org/forestry/cofo.

[7] Global Forest Resources Assessments — Linking national and international efforts. Proceedings of Expert Consultation, 1-5 July 2002, Kotka, Finland. For the report see: www.fao.org/forestry/fra-kotka4.

[8] Training of National Correspondents on Assessing and Monitoring of Forest Land Use and Changes, Rome, 17-21 November 2003, Proceedings. Forest Resources Assessment Working Paper 80. See: www.fao.org/forestry/fra.

[9] For more information on the work of the Task Force, see the Collaborative Partnership on Forests web site: www.fao.org.forestry/cpf-mar.

[10] For an analysis, Simula, M. "Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management: Overview of Progress and Issues" in: International Conference on the Contribution of Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management: The Way Forward, volume 2 (see: www.fao.org/DOCREP/005/J0077E/J077E00.HTM).

[11] For the reports of the first and second expert meetings on harmonizing forest-related definitions for use by various stakeholders, held in Rome, 22-25 January 2002, and 11-13 September 2002, respectively, see: www.fao.org/forestry/climate.

[12] See Prabhu, R., et al., "Strengthening institutional capacity and stakeholder partnerships for implementing criteria and indicators and facilitating the exchange of information between all stakeholders" in: International Conference on the Contribution of Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management, volume 2 (see note 3).

[13] Rametsteiner, E. and D. Wijewardana. "Key issues in the future development of international initiatives on forest-related criteria and indicators for sustainable development" in: International Conference on the Contribution of Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management, volume 2 (see note 3).

[14] A useful source of information is Prabhu, et al., op.cit.

[15] Formerly known as Pan-European Forest Certification.

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Proposal for a process to facilitate the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests at the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The present note describes a proposal for a process to facilitate the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests at the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests. It is proposed that the information for the review process would be collected mainly from the following sources: (a) voluntary reports by the Member States, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other relevant organizations and forest-related processes; and (b) meetings of the ad hoc expert group on consideration with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests and possible informal meetings. The note also contains a proposal for the preparation of documentation to facilitate the review at the fifth session of the Forum.

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I. Introduction

1. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2000/35, established the United Nations Forum on Forests and also invited heads of relevant organizations of the United Nations system and heads of other relevant international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments to form a collaborative partnership on forests to support the work of the Forum. It decided that the main objective of this international arrangement on forests was to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and to strengthen long-term political commitment to this end. To achieve this objective, the Council decided that the international arrangement on forests would perform six principal functions (see annex I). It also decided, inter alia, that the effectiveness of the arrangement would be reviewed after five years and that the review would also address the institutional framework of the United Nations Forum on Forests, including its position within the United Nations system.

2. At its second session, the Forum, recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35, decided, in its resolution 2/3, that the review of the international arrangement on forests would be carried out in the context of the principal functions of the arrangement. It also identified specific criteria, in relation to each of the principal functions, for the assessment of the effectiveness of the international arrangement. The specific criteria are attached as annex II to the present paper.

3. In resolution 2/3, the Forum invited its secretariat, in collaboration with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, to identify and propose at its fourth session a process to facilitate the carrying out of the review on the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests at its fifth session. Accordingly, the present proposal has been prepared by the secretariat, in conjunction with the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

4. On 23 June 2003, the General Assembly adopted resolution 57/270 B on the integrated and coordinated implementation of, and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields. In the resolution, the Assembly stressed the importance of regular review; and requested, in paragraph 46, each functional commission to examine its methods of work in order better to pursue the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits. Functional commissions are expected to report to the Economic and Social Council no later than 2005 on the outcome of this examination. In responding to the Council's request, the United Nations Forum on Forests may draw upon the review of the effectiveness carried out at its fifth session.

5. The Council, in its decision 2003/299, approved the establishment of three ad hoc expert groups for the Forum: one on approaches and mechanisms for monitoring, assessment and reporting; a second on finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies; and a third, on consideration, with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests. The present note indicates how the work of the ad hoc expert groups relates to the review process.

II. Background information

A. Decisions of the United Nations Forum on Forests related to the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests

6. In resolution 2/3, the Forum decided that the review would:

(a) Take into account specifically the work of the Forum and its members and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in facilitating implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF)/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF);

(b) Take into consideration, inter alia, the efforts of countries to implement the IPF/IFF proposals for action, the outputs of the ad hoc expert groups, intersessional meetings and country-led and organization-led initiatives and forest-related work sponsored and/or undertaken by the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests;

(c) Draw on voluntary reports from countries, organizations and processes and other outcomes of its sessions.

7. In resolution 2/3, the Forum also invited:

(a) Its secretariat, in cooperation with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and taking into account the work of the ad hoc expert groups, to gather baseline information relevant to the specific criteria;

(b) Countries to voluntarily provide quantifiable benchmarks, where appropriate, against the specific criteria, in a timely fashion, for the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests at its fifth session;

(c) The Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its members, as well as forest-related processes, to voluntarily provide quantifiable benchmarks, where appropriate, against the specific criteria, relevant to themselves, in a timely fashion, for the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests at its fifth session;

(d) Major groups to voluntarily present, at the multi-stakeholder dialogue at its fifth session, quantifiable benchmarks, where appropriate, against the specific criteria, relevant to themselves.

B. Gathering of baseline information

8. In response to the invitation to gather baseline information, the secretariat has begun to compile information against each of the specific criteria. It has drawn upon the reports of the Secretary-General for past sessions; reports of the sessions themselves; voluntary national reports to the Forum; Collaborative Partnership on Forests Framework reports and reports of major groups to sessions of the Forum; findings of country-led initiatives in support of the Forum; information on forests contained in country reports to the Commission on Sustainable Development; and other sources of information. The secretariat has also taken account of the work of the Forum's ad hoc expert groups on monitoring, assessment and reporting (see

E/CN.18/2004/2) and on finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies (see E/CN.18/2004/3), as well as the preparations for the ad hoc expert group on consideration with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests (see E/CN.18/2004/6).

C. Other review processes

9. To assist in the preparation of the present note, the secretariat took note of and collected information on the review processes undertaken by some intergovernmental organizations and functional commissions of the United Nations, namely the Commission on Population and Development, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Sustainable Development.

10. Some common features emerge from these review processes:

(a) A major review is a lengthy and potentially complex process; in the cases looked at, preparatory work was done over a period of from 18 to 27 months;

(b) Each review process involved considerable consultation during a preparatory phase. Often this was achieved by holding a series of informal and formal (preparatory committee) meetings at subregional, regional and international levels, involving countries, organizations, major groups and other stakeholders, and often culminating in a large conference or preparatory meeting several months before a special session of the General Assembly;

(c) Voluntary reports from countries formed a major input to the review process. These covered matters such as progress in implementation, lessons learned and critical areas of concern.

11. The proposed process to facilitate the review has many of the same elements, but on a more modest scale, reflecting the time and resources available.

III. Consideration of a process to facilitate the review

A. Main elements and sources of information for the process to facilitate the review

12. Based on the analysis of other review processes and the requirements set out in the resolutions referred to earlier in this present note, it is proposed that the main elements of a process to facilitate the review consist of:

(a) Submission of voluntary reports by countries, major groups and relevant organizations and processes;

(b) Preparations for and the meeting of the ad hoc expert group on consideration, with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests;

(c) Possible informal meetings;

(d) Preparation of documentation for the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

These elements are discussed further in the following paragraphs.

B. Voluntary reports

13. The voluntary reports would be intended to provide information against the specific criteria related to the six principal functions of the United Nations Forum on Forests. Voluntary reports submitted to the Forum at its second, third and fourth sessions, as well as views submitted in response to Economic and Social Council decision 2003/299, address the first function: implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action. The ad hoc expert group on approaches and mechanisms for monitoring, assessment and reporting noted that there were gaps in the information available from country reporting and identified ways by which additional information could be gathered so as to get as comprehensive a view as possible on countries' implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action. The following proposal is broadly consistent with the recommendations of the ad hoc expert group. Additional information on the criteria related to the other five principal functions of the Forum would need to be collected from the member States, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other organizations and forest-related processes to supplement the baseline information collected by the secretariat of the Forum.

14. It is proposed that voluntary reports submitted to the Forum at its fifth session by the member States, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other relevant organizations and processes would be structured according to the agreed specific criteria for the review. These reports would:

(a) Provide additional or new information (not already contained in earlier voluntary reports to the United Nations Forum on Forests or the Commission on Sustainable Development) on progress and lessons learned related to implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, decisions and resolutions taken by the Forum (in reference to the first function of the Forum);

(b) Referring to the compilation of baseline information, provide new and additional information related to the specific criteria of the final five of the six principal functions;

(c) Provide quantifiable benchmarks.

C. Ad hoc expert group on consideration with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests

15. The Economic and Social Council, in decision 2003/299 of 25 July 2003, established the ad hoc expert group on consideration with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests. The report of the meeting of the expert group, which will be held in New York from 6 to 10 September 2004, will be submitted to the Forum at its fifth session to address the consideration with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests, and to facilitate the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests.

16. As part of the preparations for the meeting of the above-mentioned ad hoc expert group, the member States and members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests have been invited to submit their views on the progress made and catalysts

and obstacles encountered by member States of the United Nations Forum on Forests and member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in implementing the IPF/IFF proposals for action and the decisions and resolutions of sessions of the Forum. In addition, one of the tasks of the ad hoc expert group is to consider other outcomes of the international arrangement on forests, inter alia, the efforts of countries to implement the IPF/IFF proposals for action, other expert groups, country-led and organization-led initiatives in support of the Forum and previous relevant initiatives, and forest-related work undertaken by the member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. All relevant information from the ad hoc expert group would be used for a process to facilitate the review of the effectiveness.

D. Possible informal meetings

17. The convening of informal meetings held at the subregional, regional and global levels would allow countries, international and regional organizations, processes, partnerships and major groups, among others, to have an opportunity to discuss progress in carrying out the principal functions of the international arrangement on forests and to provide an opportunity to examine lessons learned, success stories and obstacles and constraints encountered. Furthermore, they would offer participants an opportunity to touch upon critical areas of concern and identify priorities for action.

18. Options for meetings could include country-led and organization-led initiatives, workshops and informal consultations, as well as an agenda item on the review process in meetings already planned. Some member States may wish to organize such meetings. It may also be noted that the ad hoc expert group on approaches and mechanisms for monitoring, assessment and reporting has recommended for the consideration of the United Nations Forum on Forests that the Forum invite the regional forestry commissions of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to take the opportunity to hold discussions on the relationship between regional priorities and the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, in order to contribute to the overall assessment to be done at the fifth session of the Forum.

E. Preparations of documentation to facilitate the review at the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

19. The review process would include the drafting of a synthesis report on the work of the international arrangement on forests. It could be structured along the six principal functions of the United Nations Forum on Forests. It would be based on the voluntary reports received from member States, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other organizations and processes; the compilation of baseline information; inputs and results of the ad hoc expert groups; information related to a review of methods of work; results of informal meetings held in conjunction with preparations for the review; other relevant information about the work of the Forum, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and major groups; reports of country-led and organization-led initiatives in support of the Forum; and information on other supporting elements of the international arrangements on

forests, such as reports submitted by the major groups concerning implementation of the functions and the proposed benchmarks relative to themselves prepared for the multi-stakeholder dialogue.

F. The review at the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

20. The Forum's multi-year programme of work agreed upon at the first session, in resolution 1/1, includes three items for consideration at the fifth session of the Forum, as follows:

(a) Review of progress and consideration of future actions;

(b) Consideration, with a view to making recommendations, of the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests;

(c) Review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests.

The process proposed in the present paper would contribute to the first and third items.

21. The review referred to in the first item is seen as focusing on (a) progress in implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action and (b) progress towards sustainable forest management (as consistent with the Forum's monitoring, assessment and reporting function defined in resolution 1/1). Based upon the review of progress both in implementation and towards sustainable forest management, the Forum would consider future actions to facilitate further progress in these areas. The process proposed in the present note would contribute information related to the review of progress in the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action. The ad hoc expert group on approaches and mechanisms for monitoring, assessment and reporting has proposed, for the consideration of the Forum at its fourth session, a way to assess progress towards sustainable forest management at the fifth session (see E/CN.18/2004/2).

22. The review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests would concern the arrangement's effectiveness in carrying out all six of its functions.

23. The results of the discussions on these first and third items would be taken into consideration, along with the recommendations of the related ad hoc expert group, in the deliberations on consideration with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests. This would also ensure that the review takes account of the need to address the institutional framework of the Forum, including its position in the United Nations system, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35.

IV. Matters for consideration at the fourth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

24. At its fourth session, the Forum may wish to consider the following process to facilitate the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests at its fifth session:

(a) Distribution to the member States, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other organizations and forest-related processes, of the following documents by 15 August 2004:

(i) Suggested formats for reporting, with accompanying guidelines;

(ii) Compilation of baseline information relevant to the specific criteria that has been prepared by the secretariat of the Forum, in accordance with its resolution 2/3;

(iii) Background note on the identification of quantifiable benchmarks against the specific criteria, which would outline the scope of the exercise and suggest possible units of measurement for quantifiable benchmarks;

(b) Submission of voluntary reports by the member States, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other organizations and forest-related processes by 29 October 2004. These reports would include:

(i) Provision of additional and new information on progress made on the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action;

(ii) New, additional and/or amended information further to the compiled baseline information;

(iii) Quantifiable benchmarks from member States, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and forest-related processes in accordance with Forum resolution 2/3;

(c) Convening of informal meetings during the second half of 2004, involving the participation of the member States, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other organizations and processes and aimed at providing a perspective on:

(i) Progress in carrying out the principal functions of the international arrangement on forests as against the specific criteria for the assessment of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests;

(ii) Lessons learned, success stories, obstacles and constraints encountered in promoting sustainable forest management in the regional context;

(iii) Critical areas of concern, together with possible future challenges and priorities for action;

(d) Preparation of documentation for the review of the effectiveness at the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, including:

(i) A synthesis report on the work of the Forum, based on: the voluntary reports (including benchmarks) received; the compilation of baseline information; inputs to and results of the ad hoc expert groups; information related to a review of methods of work; results of informal meetings held in conjunction with preparations for the review, and other relevant information about the work of the Forum and the international arrangement on forests; the work of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests; and information from country-led and organization-led initiatives in support of the Forum;

(ii) Reports from the major groups concerning implementation of the functions and the proposed benchmarks relative to themselves.

Annex I

Principal functions of the international arrangement on forests*

(a) Facilitate and promote the implementation of Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IPF/IFF) proposals for action, as well as other actions that may be agreed upon, including through national forest programmes and other integrated programmes relevant to forests; catalyse, mobilize and generate financial resources; and mobilize and channel technical and scientific resources to this end, including by taking steps towards the broadening and development of mechanisms and/or further initiatives to enhance international cooperation;

(b) Provide a forum for continued policy development and dialogue among Governments, which would involve international organizations and other interested parties, including major groups, as identified in Agenda 21, to foster a common understanding on sustainable forest management and to address forest issues and emerging areas of priority concern in a holistic, comprehensive and integrated manner;

(c) Enhance cooperation, as well as policy and programme coordination on forest-related issues among relevant international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments, as well as contribute to synergies among them, including coordination among donors;

(d) Foster international cooperation, including North-South and public-private partnerships, as well as cross-sectoral cooperation at the national, regional and global levels;

(e) Monitor and assess progress at the national, regional and global levels through reporting by Governments, as well as by regional and international organizations, institutions and instruments, and on this basis consider future actions needed;

(f) Strengthening political commitment to the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests through ministerial engagement; developing ways to liaise with the governing bodies of international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments; and the promotion of action-oriented dialogue and policy formulation related to forests.

* From Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35.

Annex II

Specific criteria for the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests[a]

"*The United Nations Forum on Forests*,

...

"*Decides* that the specific criteria for the assessment of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests are the following:

(a) Implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action:

"(i) The extent to which countries, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and other actors have made progress in implementing the relevant IPF/IFF proposals for action;

"(ii) The extent to which countries have developed and started to implement national forest programmes or equivalent processes;

"(iii) The extent to which participation of stakeholders in those programmes and processes has been enhanced;

"(iv) The extent to which the international arrangement on forests has facilitated and promoted countries' implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, focusing on the means of implementation (finance, transfer of environmentally sound technologies and capacity-building) as well as the relevant common items;

"(v) The extent to which countries have made progress in assessing the IPF/IFF proposals for action in order to determine their relevance in their national context;

"(b) Forum for continued policy development and dialogue:

"(i) The extent to which the international arrangement on forests, including, inter alia, Forum sessions, intersessional work and the multi-stakeholder dialogue, and the related work of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its members, as well as country- and organization-led initiatives, have enhanced forest policy development and dialogue;

"(ii) The extent to which the international arrangement on forests has worked in a transparent and participatory manner, including through the involvement of major groups;

"(iii) The extent to which the Collaborative Partnership on Forests members have responded to the guidance of the Forum;

"(iv) The extent to which progress has been made in reaching a common understanding of forest-related concepts, terminology and definitions;

"(c) Cooperation and policy and programme coordination:

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[a] From resolution 2/3 adopted at the second session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, see *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2002, Supplement No. 22* (E/2002/42), chap. II.B.

"(i) The extent to which partnerships relevant to the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action have been advanced;

"(ii) The extent to which the international arrangement on forests has facilitated and promoted coordination and cooperation among other forest-related organizations, instruments and processes;

"(d) International cooperation:

"(i) The extent to which the international community, including bilateral and multilateral donors and organizations, Collaborative Partnership on Forests members and international and regional processes, have facilitated the implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, inter alia, through the provision of financial, technical and scientific resources and capacity-building;

"(ii) The extent to which the international arrangement on forests has promoted efforts by the international community to facilitate the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action through, in particular, North-South cooperation and public-private partnerships, as well as through South-South and North-North cooperation;

"(e) Monitoring and assessing progress through reporting:

"(i) The extent to which countries, regions, organizations and processes respond to the call from Forum and Collaborative Partnership on Forests members for voluntary reports, with a focus on the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action;

"(ii) The extent to which trends, lessons learned, emerging issues and actions are identified and become apparent through those voluntary reports;

"(iii) The extent to which major groups have been encouraged to participate in developing voluntary reports;

"(iv) The extent to which Collaborative Partnership on Forests members have worked to strengthen countries' abilities to monitor, assess and report progress in the implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action;

"(v) The extent to which Forum sessions provide opportunities to voluntarily report progress and lessons learned;

"(vi) The extent to which countries make progress in monitoring, assessment and reporting through, inter alia, applying criteria and indicator processes or similar tools in their efforts to achieve sustainable forest management;

"(f) Strengthening political commitment:

"(i) The extent to which high-level engagement furthers political commitment to the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action by countries;

"(ii) The extent to which the international arrangement on forests succeeds in enhancing the positioning of forests on the international agenda;

....."

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Item 5 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Common items for each session: enhanced cooperation

Enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination

Note by the Secretary-General

Summary

The United Nations Forum on Forests and its secretariat actively pursue a wide range of cooperation and coordination in order to effectively promote and implement the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action and achieve sustainable management of forests. The present report provides an outline of efforts made by the United Nations Forum on Forests to engage other relevant United Nations bodies, international instruments and mechanisms, intergovernmental organizations and stakeholders in increased collaboration and coordination resulting in many tangible advances in consensus-building and coordinated action. It also highlights new and emerging areas where the participation of the United Nations Forum on Forests will be crucial for ensuring that political commitment to forest issues is strengthened. As the international community moves further towards greater collaboration and coordination on sustainable forest management, a number of new opportunities are arising that the United Nations Forum on Forests could and should seize.

* E/CN.18/2004/1.

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I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 6 of resolution 1/1,[1] the United Nations Forum on Forests decided, inter alia, to address enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination at each session. Many actions related to that function take place within the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and are described in the Collaborative Partnership on Forests Framework 2004 (E/CN.18/2004/INF.1). The present note underscores how important it is for the United Nations Forum on Forests to work closely with other intergovernmental bodies, international and regional processes, organizations, institutions and instruments to raise the profile of forests and their role in addressing broader development concerns; enhance linkages with other sectors; strengthen ties with regional bodies; and facilitate partnerships with and among major groups.

II. Enhanced cooperation

A. Collaborative Partnership on Forests

2. The United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat is an active participant in this collaborative partnership, which was established in 2001 to support the work of the Forum and to enhance cooperation and coordination on forest issues among its members. It contributes to the joint activities of the partnership and conveys the results of the work of the Forum to the governing bodies and other meetings of the partners. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests consists of 14 international organizations, institutions and secretariats,[2] has been chaired by FAO and supported by the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat. Terms of reference and working modalities are described in the latest version (revised, June 2003) of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests Policy Document.[3]

3. The CPF Framework 2004 (E/CN.18/2004/INF.1) highlights joint Collaborative Partnership on Forests initiatives, such as the Sourcebook on Funding for Sustainable Forest Management,[3] and work on streamlining forest-related reporting and on harmonizing forest-related definitions. It also describes other joint activities of Collaborative Partnership on Forests members in support of the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests and enhanced cooperation and coordination on forest-related issues, including support given to intersessional activities, such as Ad Hoc Expert Groups and country/organization-led initiatives. While the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests receive guidance from the United Nations Forum on Forests, each takes direction from and is accountable to its own governing body. In addition, FAO, UNEP and ITTO second staff to the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat.

B. Stakeholders

4. Stakeholders provide important perspectives on the implementation of intergovernmental agreements and they are well placed to identify emerging issues and share innovative ideas. The United Nations Forum on Forests holds a multi-stakeholder dialogue at each of its sessions and invites representatives of the nine major groups to contribute discussion papers. At the same time, lack of financial and

human resources frequently constitutes a bottleneck for major groups to participate in the Forum and related activities. Major groups participated in the meetings of the ad hoc expert groups established in support of the work of the Forum, in which their participation was particularly effective in focusing attention on action that the United Nations Forum on Forests could take to support stakeholder efforts to advance sustainable forest management. The secretariat of the Forum has maintained close contacts with the focal points of all major groups and has also used every opportunity during meetings and conferences it has attended to inform major groups about the work and aim of the Forum as well as to explore how their engagement in the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests can become more purposeful and effective.

C. Country-led initiatives in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests and other relevant meetings

5. The country- and organization-led initiatives in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests provide an opportunity for experts to consider matters prior to the sessions of the Forum, thereby increasing the understanding of the issues and thus facilitating discussions. The United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat provides input and advice to all initiatives explicitly held in support of the Forum. The Global Workshop on Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies and Capacity-Building for Sustainable Forest Management, held in Brazzaville; the workshop on lessons learned on sustainable forest management in Africa, held in Nairobi; and the country-led initiative on decentralization, federal systems in forestry and national forest programmes, held in Interlaken, Switzerland, are all examples of the usefulness of that kind of initiative in gathering a large number of country representatives, major groups and relevant organizations, disseminating information and lessons learned, as well as in providing more informal settings for discussions and exploring new and emerging forest-related issues. An additional meeting of particular relevance to the Forum at its fourth session was the Expert Consultation on Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management held in Cebu City, Philippines. Outcomes of the country-led initiatives and other relevant meetings will be available at the current session to inform deliberations.

D. Partnerships and processes

6. The World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 2002, confirmed the importance of partnerships to achieve sustainable forest management. Since that Summit, several additional collaborative arrangements have been established. Key partnerships that specifically address forests include the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, the Asia Forest Partnership, the International Model Forest Network, and the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration. The United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat supports and in some cases participates in those efforts.

7. The Forum secretariat is also compiling information on regional initiatives and processes, such as the regional and international processes on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, of which there are currently nine, to identify potential synergies and collaboration. South-South and North-South partnerships

will also be examined, along with strengths and weaknesses in regional cooperation so that ways to replicate successful examples can be identified.

III. Enhanced policy and programme coordination

A. Meeting intergovernmental goals and targets

8. The United Nations Forum on Forests has several opportunities to relay to the international community how forests can contribute to broader development concerns both now and in the future. In its resolution 57/270 B of 23 June 2003, the General Assembly decided that organizations and bodies of the United Nations system should incorporate the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits into their programmes of work. Recent summits and conferences most relevant to the United Nations Forum on Forests are the Millennium Summit (New York, September 2000); the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, August-September 2002); and the International Conference on Financing for Development (Monterrey, Mexico, March 2002).

9. When the United Nations Millennium Declaration was adopted as the outcome of the Millennium Summit in resolution 55/2 of 8 September 2000, the General Assembly resolved to intensify efforts related to the sustainable management of forests. As the United Nations body established by the Economic and Social Council to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, the United Nations Forum on Forests is in a unique position to take a lead in promoting the role of forests in implementing the Millennium Declaration and contribute to achieving the goals related to sustainable development and poverty eradication.

10. The Secretary-General was also requested to review, in 2005, progress in implementing the Millennium Declaration and to prepare a report to be submitted for review to the General Assembly. At its fifty-eighth session, the General Assembly also considered convening a high-level plenary meeting during its sixtieth session to further review implementation.

11. In its resolution 57/253 of 20 December 2002, the General Assembly recognized the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development as a framework for the future work of all United Nations bodies. It endorsed the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and adopted sustainable development as a key element in all United Nations activities and urged timely implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the Summit.

12. The General Assembly in its resolution 58/230 of 23 December 2003 also highlighted the importance of implementing the Monterrey Consensus to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Indeed, the effective use of national resources, trade, official development assistance for technical cooperation, and foreign direct investment are critical to creating a macroeconomic environment for supporting sustainable forest management. The United Nations Forum on Forests Ad Hoc Expert Group on Finance and Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies can be seen as a first step towards addressing many of those issues as they relate to forests both at the national and international levels.

B. The Economic and Social Council: implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

13. When the General Assembly adopted resolution 57/270 B on integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields, it also examined the role of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions. The General Assembly requested that the methods of work be examined by each functional commission and relevant subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council on the basis of a report of the Secretary-General. The General Assembly also requested that the outcome of that examination be submitted to the Council no later than 2005. The exercise coincides with the United Nations Forum on Forests review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests, thus providing an opportunity to respond to the request.

C. Functional Commissions of the Economic and Social Council

14. As the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council continue to seek ways to further link the work of its subsidiary and related bodies, interaction with other functional commissions and United Nations bodies, particularly with the Commission on Sustainable Development, will become increasingly important for the United Nations Forum on Forests and its secretariat. For example, the participation of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in the deliberations of the Forum at the current session on indigenous forest-related issues is highly relevant.

D. Regional bodies

15. The United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat has encouraged and engaged regional bodies as well as drawn more heavily upon their knowledge and expertise for enhanced regional cooperation and coordination on the forest sector. They are becoming increasingly important in assisting countries to achieve sustainable forest management. At the third session, various regional institutions, bodies and processes contributed to discussions, and showcased lessons learned. At the fourth session, the trend of incorporating regional perspectives will continue, primarily through holding panels on Africa and small island developing States as part of the session.

16. Six Regional Forestry Commissions operate under the auspices of FAO: Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin American and the Caribbean, the Near East, and North America. Efforts are being made to strengthen the links between these commissions and the United Nations Forum on Forests. In March 2003, the FAO Committee on Forestry recommended that the Regional Forestry Commissions facilitate the flow of information between the United Nations Forum on Forests and countries and help to increase awareness of the importance of implementing IPF/IFF proposals for action.[4] In response, FAO organized workshops in conjunction with regional forestry commission meetings to discuss the implementation of IPF/IFF proposals of action. The results of the meetings on the Africa and Asia-Pacific regions will be presented to the United Nations Forum on Forests at its fourth

session during the panels on implementation in Africa, Africa Day, and implementation in Small Island Developing States, Small Island Developing States Day, respectively.

17. The United Nations regional commissions could also bring their expertise to the table in the same way. While the Economic Commission for Europe is the only one that currently deals specifically with forests and timber, others have programmes on natural resource use, governance, renewable energy and sustainable development in the context of human settlements — areas all relevant to forests. Moreover, the newly established Regional Committees on Sustainable Development align their work with the multi-year programme of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development that will include forests on its agenda during its 2012/2013 cycle.

E. International instruments and mechanisms relevant to the forest sector

18. Consistent with United Nations Forum on Forests resolution 1/1, the Forum, through its secretariat, has sought to increase cooperation and coordination as well as to promote synergies with relevant international instruments. The Forum secretariat has made every effort to participate in and make substantive contributions to many of the meetings and workshops relevant to forests organized by different instruments and mechanisms. The secretariat's increased efforts to play an active role have resulted in growing recognition and consideration of sustainable forest management principles in the deliberations of those instruments and mechanisms. Cooperation, coordination and the creation of synergies will be increasingly important to further promote the consideration of sustainable forest management.

1. Instruments

(a) Convention on Biological Diversity

19. Both the United Nations Forum on Forests and the Convention on Biological Diversity recognize that their forest-related work is mutually supportive, and the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Coordinator and Head of the United Nations Forum on Forests are collaborating on issues of common interest. Convention on Biological Diversity decision VI/22 on forest biological diversity,[5] the Ministerial Declaration and Message from the United Nations Forum on Forests to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (see Forum resolution 2/1),[6] and Forum resolution 3/4[7] reflect the need for this collaborative arrangement.

20. In resolution 4/4, the United Nations Forum on Forests also invited member States and members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to submit their views on three topics relevant to the United Nations Forum on Forests and Convention on Biological Diversity collaboration for discussion at its fourth session: (a) the relationship between the ecosystem approach and sustainable forest management; (b) the management, sustainable use and benefit-sharing of forest biological diversity; and (c) the relationship between IPF/IFF proposals for action and the expanded programme of work on forest biological diversity. To date, the

views of Member States and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests have not yet been received by the Forum secretariat. However, the secretariat will introduce these views in an oral report to the Forum at its fourth session and the results of the discussions at the session are to be provided to the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity for their information

21. A meeting of experts hosted by the Convention on Biological Diversity secretariat in July 2003 concluded that sustainable forest management "can be considered as a means of applying the ecosystem approach to forests".[8] In addition, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity conducted a preliminary assessment of the links between IPF/IFF proposals for action and the Convention on Biological Diversity expanded programme of work on forest biological diversity, which was made available at the ninth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice. At its seventh meeting, the Conference of the Parties took note of this assessment and invited the Coordinator and Head of the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat, the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and others, to provide any further views on the assessment.

(b) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

22. The ninth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was held in Milan, Italy, from 1 to 12 December 2003, and its Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, tackled many forest-related items, including rules guiding afforestation and reforestation under the Clean Development Mechanism. The good practice guidance for land use, land-use change and forestry, developed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, was also considered as well as a format to report greenhouse gas emissions and removal by sinks under the convention. In view of the many issues on the agenda of the ninth Conference of the Parties that were relevant to forests, the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat organized a side event on Collaborative Partnership on Forests activities during the session.

(c) United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

23. The sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification met in Havana, Cuba, from 25 August to 5 September 2003. The United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat highlighted the links between forests and efforts to combat desertification and poverty. It also noted synergies between the United Nations Forum on Forests and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and identified opportunities to strengthen collaboration with other conventions, international organizations, institutions and agencies through continued participation in the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

24. At its sixth session, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, in collaboration with the Coordinator and Head of the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests and the secretariats of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity, to address the needs of low forest cover countries, including by developing a joint approach on forests and, inter alia, to cooperate with the Tehran process and its secretariat to strengthen

the capacity of low forest cover countries to combat desertification, land degradation and deforestation. The United Nations Forum on Forests specifically addressed the issues of low forest cover countries and the Tehran process during the second session of the United Nations Forum on Forests. The governing bodies of FAO and UNEP have also responded to the call to cooperate with the Tehran process.

(d) Other multilateral environmental agreements

25. The United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat has continued to exchange information with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora on issues of common concern and is working with the secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands to support regional initiatives such as the Antigua Guatemala convention for the sustainable management of mangrove forests (see E/CN.18/2003/11).

(e) Global Environment Facility

26. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) provides substantial funding to the forest sector through its programme on biological diversity. As of June 2003, GEF committed more than US$ 777 million for forest-related projects and that funding leveraged nearly US$ 2 billion from partners. GEF has also the potential to enhance financial support to sustainable forest management under its new Operational Programme on Sustainable Land Management. To this end, the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Finance and Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies recommended (see E/CN.18/2004/5) that the United Nations Forum on Forests invite GEF to seek the advice of the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests on developing the sustainable forest management component of the sustainable land management focal area.

(f) International Tropical Timber Agreement

27. The International Tropical Timber Council, the governing body of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), held its thirty-fifth session in Yokohama, Japan, in November 2003, followed by the second preparatory committee meeting for negotiation of the successor agreement to the International Tropical Timber Agreement 1994. The current Agreement is scheduled to expire on 31 December 2006. Two working group sessions and two preparatory committee meetings identified issues and clarified the scope, funding mechanisms, institutional set-up, and emerging issues to be addressed in the successor agreement. The next step is the conference on the negotiations, which will take place under the aegis of UNCTAD from 26 to 30 July 2004 in Geneva.

2. Other bodies and mechanisms

(a) Governing bodies of the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests

28. Many of the governing bodies of the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests are increasingly calling for greater focus on sustainable forest management in their activities and for support to the United Nations Forum on Forests and the work of the partnership. Many of the outcomes of, for example, the FAO Committee on Forestry, the UNEP Governing Council, ITTC, as well as many

of the Conferences of the Parties mentioned above, explicitly support enhanced policy and programme coordination. Those forums are also, in many instances, well placed to assist in country implementation. For example, the FAO National Forest Programme Facility supports development and implementation of national forest programmes that embrace cross-sectoral and participatory approaches.

(b) World Trade Organization

29. The Doha Ministerial Declaration adopted in November 2001 called for enhancing ways in which trade and the environment can be mutually supportive and encouraged cooperation between the World Trade Organization (WTO) and other international organizations. The United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat has been participating in the dialogue through the Committee on Trade and Environment and in a side event organized during the fifth Ministerial Conference of the WTO in Cancun, Mexico, in September 2003. The work with WTO is particularly relevant to paragraph 45 (c) of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation,[9] concerning illegal international trade in forest products and paragraph 45 (f) which calls for international cooperation on issues tied to sustainable forest management, including trade.

IV. Conclusions

30. **The United Nations Forum on Forests, its secretariat, other intergovernmental organizations, institutions and processes, as well as a wide variety of stakeholders, have increasingly been finding opportunities to enhance collaboration and coordination on forest issues. These efforts have culminated in the many activities outlined in the present note and increased understanding of the importance of sustainable forest management and the role of forests in addressing broader development goals, sustainable development and other cross-cutting issues relevant to forests.**

31. **To the United Nations Forum on Forests and the international forest community, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests remains a valuable mechanism for United Nations agencies, intergovernmental organizations, convention secretariats and other stakeholders, to address common concerns, harmonize and streamline reporting, avoid duplication and promote increased cooperation and collaboration in a number of projects and programmes.**

32. **Country- and organization-led initiatives continue to provide important support to the United Nations Forum on Forests by helping to build consensus on issues prior to their discussion at sessions. Similarly, regional and international partnerships among Governments and stakeholders are transforming proposals into action on the ground.**

33. **As the international community places greater emphasis on a holistic and coordinated approach to development, it will be important for the United Nations Forum on Forests to ensure that the use of forests for development and the effects on forests of other activities, are well understood. By engaging in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the outcomes of other major summits and conferences, the United Nations Forum on Forests can be instrumental in keeping forests as an integral part of the development agenda. In this respect, there is a need to further enhance communication between the**

United Nations Forum on Forests and other relevant bodies and processes, and to further strengthen collaboration on common priorities.

V. Points for discussion

34. The United Nations Forum on Forests may wish to:

(a) Consider the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the relationship between poverty eradication and forests in its future work, including as part of the review on the international arrangement on forests at its fifth session;

(b) Invite the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to prepare a contribution on the role of forests in implementing the Millennium Declaration as part of the Secretary-General's comprehensive review;

(c) Consider and redirect its work in relation to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, including the links between forests and other sectors, as well as invite newly established relevant partnerships to contribute to the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests;

(d) Assess the impacts of implementing the Monterrey Consensus on sustainable forest management and how these changes affect the relationship between forests and poverty;

(e) Prepare a message to the eighth Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity conveying the results of deliberations on the three topics on which views were sought;

(f) Acknowledge the contribution of the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in streamlining forest-related reporting and further invite them to continue their joint efforts, make information accessible on sources of funding sustainable forest management, and harmonize forest-related definitions;

(g) Consider ways and means to provide more opportunities for stakeholders to participate in its work, such as through ad hoc expert groups and country-led initiatives;

(h) Encourage the increased participation of regional bodies, institutions and processes, such as the regional commissions and FAO Forestry Commissions, to contribute more directly to the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

Notes

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2001, Supplement No. 22* (E/2001/42/Rev.1-E/CN.18/2001/3/Rev.1), part two, chap. I, sect. B.

[2] Collaborative Partnership on Forests members: Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR); Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO); International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO); secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity; secretariat of the Global Environment Facility (GEF); secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa; secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat; United Nations Development Programme

(UNDP); United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF); World Bank; World Conservation Union (IUCN).

[3] See the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat web site: www.un.org/esa/forests.

[4] For the report on the sixteenth session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO-2003/REP), see: www.fao.org/DOCREP/MEETING/007/Y9203E/Y9203E00.HTM.

[5] See: www.biodiv.org.

[6] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2002, Supplement No. 42* (E/2002/42-E/CN.18/2002/14), chap. I, sect. B.

[7] Ibid., *2003, Supplement No. 42* (E/2003/42-E/CN.18/2003/13), chap. I, sect. C.

[8] For the final report of the meeting, see UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/INF/4.

[9] See *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.